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THE CHANGING ROLE OF CANADIAN INDIAN WOMEN

A report prepared for the
Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada

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SECTION 1: THE PROBLEM

INTRODUCTION

At its general conference in 1960, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proposed to member states a long term program for the advancement of women, in an attempt to increase opportunities for women to utilize their abilities. A statement of this program's aims was subsequently made:

"The importance of the economic and social role of women in the development of states that are industrialized or on their way to becoming industrialized is generally recognized. Such development will take place with their full and complete participation or it will not take place at all." (Chaton:1968:145)

This paper focuses on changes in the roles of Canadian Indian women, particularly in northern communities where the pace of change is undergoing tremendous acceleration, and on the part the women themselves play in this process. Seen in the larger context of Canadian society the results may shed light on roles of Canadian women generally. Canada today presents a microscopic model of the changing world: despite access to the mechanical technology of the "developed" countries, it retains most problems of the so-called "undeveloped" nations. The ambiguity which surrounds the position of women is by no means the least important lag in our social technology, as Canada moves from the industrial to the post industrial age. Indian communities have not escaped this accelerated social change. They have been the last to be touched by the modern world, and they stand to benefit from - or suffer from - the effects of technology that are now changing the whole of Canada.

Dunning (1964) has suggested that a rough line can be drawn between northern and southern Indian settlements and that their overall pattern

of adjustment to change will differ because of the varying intensity of culture contact. As enthusiasm is generated about the possibilities of "developing the north", north and south are being pulled together and toward a common future which they are often unprepared to meet. There is often a tendency in Canada to forget that economic development depends as much on human skills as on capital investment. Lip service is paid to this ideal, but the complex processes of development as they affect living, breathing human beings are only too frequently oversimplified.

Change affects all segments of the population, but the occurrence and rates of change are far from uniform. A sentence in a western newspaper contrasted the old and the new worlds in Canada.

"It is incongruous to see a Winnipeg built Black Brant rocket streaking through the atmosphere while a few miles away an Indian woman digs into one of several coal bins scattered throughout her village." (Edmonton Journal, Jan. 20, 1968)

Such dichotomies are becoming commonplace in Canada and are frequently brought to the attention of the general public. Attention focused on the so-called "Indian problem" creates not only a certain level of awareness among Indians and non-Indians, but also a demand for solutions. The tendency, however, is always to expect "top-down" solutions from the Federal Government. This fails to take into account the more realistic possibility of reversing the process and looking for ideas from the people directly affected and discovering their outlook, attitudes and ideas. Power implies the ability to make and implement decisions. Governments can make decisions, but without adequate channels whereby reactions can be fed back directly to them, they cannot put them into effect:

"Administrative officials.... should take part in a two-way stream

of communication and not merely one descending from the top. Otherwise top officials may find that they have based their policy on a complete misconception of the facts that their underlings possess." (Weiner, 1950:69)

What does "modernization" or "progress" or "technology" mean to an Indian woman on a reserve or in a northern community? To what extent does she participate in "social Change"? What concrete problems does she face and how does she think they should be handled? How does she structure cognitive space: does her concept of the world she lives in extend beyond the boundaries of her family to include the larger community, and if so how far does this community extend? She is charged with the responsibilities of linking the past with the future in a world she does not fully understand herself, and of keeping the family unit stable enough to withstand total breakdown, yet flexible enough to adapt to changing economic pressures. She is closely involved with problems of food, clothing, housing, income and the education of her children. To what extent is she consulted about these?

Historically, persons of Indian ancestry have been the subjects of somewhat erratic administration. A Department of Indian Affairs was created in 1880, but in 1936, Indians were allocated to the Department of Mines and Resources where their affairs were directed until 1950. At this time they were absorbed into the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. As such they remained a relatively invisible segment of the population; Indian women were even less conspicuous than Indian men. Since 1950, Canada's involvement with native populations in other countries has led to an increasing recognition that her own native people seldom share fully in the benefits that are deemed part of

Canadian citizenship. Whether this is an ethnic or a regional problem has been disputed, but the latest shift of the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB) from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in 1966 would indicate that the government currently holds the latter view. The danger which exists, especially in the north, is one of linking the people with the region and of being concerned with regional economic development as a panacea for human problems.

The Indian Affairs Branch concerns itself only with registered Indians; that is, persons descended through the paternal line from Indians who accepted residence rights on Indian reserves or otherwise designated "Indian settlements". As of December 31, 1965, there were a total of 218,198 registered Indians and an unknown but probably equally large number of persons of Indian descent who do not legally qualify as Indians. Of the registered Indians 111,771 were men and 106,327 women: 52,831 women were over 16 years of age, 29,155 between the ages of six and fifteen, 23,410 five years or under; the ages of 931 were not specified. (Dept. of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) Currently this segment of the population is increasing at an annual rate of 3% a year compared with a 2% yearly increase for all Canadians.

A striking feature of social change is the proliferation of new roles which become available for both men and women. For expediency it is necessary to define the concept of role as it is used in this study. Historical assessments of the term by Neiman and Hughes, (1951-52) Sarnin (1954) and Banton (1965) show the lack of consistency in its treatment and definition. Linton considered status a named

position in the social hierarchy distinct from the person who occupied it and role, "the dynamic aspects of status, the blueprint for social action," (Linten:1936) but treated the two as inseparable. The inadequacy of this definition lies in the fact that it does not really account for social change, the assumption being that everyone agrees on the expected patterns of behavior. His emphasis is on relationships of individuals to their culture rather than on relationships between individuals. Sarbin's attempt to make role observable and independent from status focused on actual behavior, role being "a sequence of learned actions performed by a person in an interaction situation". (Gould and Kelb:1965) but others would call this role behavior.

Banton notes that some consensus is emerging:

"It is agreed that behavior can be related to a position in the social structure; that actual behavior can be related to the individual's ideas of what is appropriate (role cognitions) or to other's ideas about what he will do (expectations) or to other people's ideas of what he should do (norms). In this light, role may be understood as a set of norms and expectations applied to the incumbent of a particular position"...and..."it seems sufficient to define roles simply as sets of rights and obligations." (Banton, 1965: 28-29)

This latter definition is the one most applicable to this study, which focuses on the changes in beliefs about rights and obligations. Briefly, the problem can be stated as an examination of difficulties Indian women encounter in situations of rapid social change, their awareness about these difficulties, tensions created within the system, ways in which they attempt to resolve tensions and the effect this has on their status and role, not only in their own terms but also in the terms of those with whom they come into contact. The really significant question is less one of defining their "status"

than of identifying available roles and courses of action in the transition from a society which is primarily ascription-oriented to one which claims to be highly achievement-oriented.

Anthropology is essentially the study of alternatives. It attempts to point out both differences in ways of life and unsuspected similarities, thus broadening ideas about "human nature". In order to operate effectively within one's environment, one must be able to choose a course of action and such choice requires an awareness of alternatives. This report will attempt to outline some of the alternatives available to Indian women in the past and present, and to suggest trends which may occur in the future.

The position advanced here is that the role of Indian women is changing rapidly, but not so drastically as that of Indian men. In spite of changes which occur in their lives, they still have their role as mother, and their children are their link with the future. In any change situation links are necessary to bridge the gap between past and future, and women may be able to use their abilities to considerable advantage in this way. Indian women's roles were never as rigidly defined as were those of men; they are in a position of redefining them now and will continue to do so. The extent to which they will be able to do this to their own satisfaction, and to the satisfaction of others, will depend on the availability and understanding of the opportunities open to them. In a world that demands flexibility, some Indian women are showing themselves to be adaptable. This adaptability and acceptance of change should blind no one with first hand experience of the Indian situation in Canada to the very real human cost that all Canadian Indians are paying as they move into a new

world.

Any research reflects both the perceptions of the researcher and the specific situations encountered. The limitations of time imposed on this study make it largely impressionistic and an attempt is made to examine possibilities rather than to draw firm conclusions.

METHOD OF RESEARCH:

This study is in no sense a comprehensive ethnography, but rather an attempt at conducting research in an interaction framework with a specific focus in mind, namely, the emergence of new roles. Fundamental to experimental science is the axiom that given a similar situation, under similar sets of conditions, one will achieve similar results. The difficulty in social science is that research can neither be totally value free, nor can it be completely replicated. Physical science deals with inert, quantitative matter, whereas in social science the researcher's observations reflect his own perceptions. Both he and his subject matter are dynamic and can change from day to day. It is not possible to control such variables, and mathematical models of behavior, though helpful at the theoretical level, are less applicable at the individual level. There is a need to tie general theory, treated as a body of interpretive principles with empirical data based on specific experience and to recognize that the two never mirror one another identically, but rather, that one complements the other.

A principle recognized in the physical sciences states that one cannot overlook the effect of the interaction between the observer and the phenomena observed. The importance of this is magnified many times in the social sciences since the person being interviewed is equally concerned with defining the role of the researcher. It would not be an understatement to say that most Indian people in Canada have had some contact with an anthropologist and that they are justifiably sensitive about being treated as curiosities. My age and sex were

advantages, as was the fact that I was there to learn from them and to get their ideas to be used in a study which included all women in Canada. Since the majority of research students in the Yukon previously have been men, this role was a relatively neutral one.

Because I was interested primarily in qualitative information I avoided the use of questionnaires, tape-recorders and note-taking in interviews and relied on informal discussion and personal observation. This maximized the possibility of women introducing unanticipated material and ensured focusing on problems which they identified, thereby locating areas of stress. In addition, discussions with non-Indian persons were a valuable source of information. Much of the data is subjective and presents the individual's personal point of view, but this is helpful in that it provides his or her own perception of the topic. The questionnaire approach tends to minimize active participation and to treat persons not as individuals but as digits to affirm or negate an hypothesis. Numerical assessment is of limited value here except in cases where it is available and can be used as a baseline. Statistics dealing with native women are generally unstandardized, unreliable or unavailable; beyond this, they are static and trends blur individual efforts. The legal definition of "Indian" upon which statistics are based is a questionable one because of status loss by Indian women upon marriage to a non-Indian. The women with whom I talked were those who identified themselves as Indian and who were regarded by non-Indians as Indian, regardless of the presence or absence of status.

Prior to research in the Yukon, I reviewed relevant sources of literature dealing with Indian women and with women in general, and

discussed with southern urban Indian women living in Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton and Vancouver their interpretation of their own role and how they felt it was changing. It was also possible to attend a four day workshop of representatives from Ontario Homemakers Clubs, part of a Conference of British Columbia Homemakers. I discussed my area of interest with Anthropologists, Educators, Indian Affairs Branch officials in Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton and Vancouver, and with persons who had worked on reserves in various capacities, corresponded with Indian women in different parts of Canada and visited the Maniwaki reserve in Quebec. The period of more specific field research consisted of nine weeks in the Yukon between April 16 and June 17, 1968. Time was a major limiting factor because of the futility of trying to account for the wide diversity in any one area, much less in Canada.

The Yukon emerged as a practical possibility for more focused study because of the opportunity it provided to observe the direct and indirect effects of rapid social change on the people who have spent their whole lives there. The technological development taking place in the Yukon today duplicates structurally a trend which has occurred in many parts of the world, and it was anticipated that research here might give clearer and better perspective on what has happened and is happening to the woman's role elsewhere. In the Territory, Whitehorse was chosen as the base for research because of the focal point it occupies in the territory as the urban centre which affects all the villages and which many of the native people gravitate. While there, I was able to stay at a hostel to which Indian women who are visiting Whitehorse on a short term basis, usually as hospital

outpatients, are directed. Established in 1954 by a lay Apostolate of the Roman Catholic church, the hostel is intended to serve as an intermediary between the town and village. It also assumes the broader function of providing a situation in which women from different villages come into personal contact with one another. Here I was able to meet women from various villages in the Yukon and northern B.C., talk with them individually, and participate in occasional discussions involving a number of women. The incidence of such general conversations among groups of women depended greatly on the number of women present at any one time (larger groups tending to break down to groups of two or three), their various ages, the villages they came from, whether they had had previous contact with one another, and their personal reaction toward having a non-Indian woman among them. Except in the cases of a few of the older women, English was the language they used in conversation with each other.

When opportunities arose to visit villages, I was frequently able to talk with women again in their homes as a personal acquaintance rather than simply as a research worker. Discussions with women in villages proved most feasible when I had met them previously or was introduced to them by someone they knew personally. On other occasions women whom I had met briefly in villages came to the hostel and could identify me as someone they knew. Sometimes I was asked to carry messages between women in town and the village or vice versa, the content of which varied from transmitting oral information to delivering gifts. In short, isolated encounters in either village or city proved less significant than did relationships in which some continuity was possible. During my stay in the Yukon I was able to examine the

processes as the woman's environment changed from that of the city to that of the village and vice versa.

Settlements of Teslin, Atlin, Carcross, Squanga Lake, Pelly Crossing, Dawson City and Ross River were visited in addition to the Whitehorse area. Because of financial and time limitations the length of time spent in any one village, varying from one to eight (non-consecutive) days was too short to attempt an analysis of community structure and efforts were concentrated on getting to know a few women. Through women staying at the hostel, I was able to meet relatives and friends who had moved more permanently to Whitehorse. The final ten days of the research period were spent living at one of the student residences where Indian students may stay when they come to secondary school in town.

Although figures are of little relevance because of the unique contributions of each individual I talked with over 100 native women aged 15 or over and about one third as many men. Conversations varied depending on the context in which we met and the opportunity to see them again. Of these women, 14 live in southern urban cities, 20 on Indian reserves and 77 in the Yukon. In addition I met a considerably larger number of women with whom extended conversations were not possible.

TRADITIONAL ROLES:

There seems to be general agreement among anthropologists currently engaged in northern research that it is more meaningful to examine the impact of new patterns of interaction among Indians and between Indians and non-Indians than it is to romanticize about traditional culture patterns. However, it is necessary to review briefly some of the available information on the traditional roles of Canadian Indian women if only to show the dearth and inconsistency of the data. Although this study is concerned primarily with the roles of women, rather than with their status vis a vis men, much of the literature treats them primarily within this latter framework.

Considerable artificiality in the earliest records has arisen from the tendency of the observer to interpret the position of Indian women in terms of his own culture. These records were often provided by male traders who were barred from the company of women except when they were in the company of their husbands. These traders often projected their own views of women into their narratives. Such accounts, though valuable, must be regarded with caution because of the categorical statements which appear, for example:

"...Indians look upon the woman in a totally different light from what we do in Europe and condemn them as slaves to do all the drudgery. I have seen a young chief with no less than three women attendant on him to run after his arrows while he was amusing himself with shooting squirrels: I have also seen Indians when moving from one place to another mount their horses and canter away at their ease, whilst their women were left not only to walk but also to carry very heavy loads on their backs after them." (Weld, 1799:412)

Such observations ignore the more arduous nature of men's work which was carried on sporadically but involved greater hardship and risk.

Women's work was of a more continuous nature but in return they were provided with greater security. In addition a woman derived personal esteem from being recognized as a good worker.

Missionaries, who also provided much information about the contact period, were in no better position to gather much reliable data on women. Being there with the explicit purpose of changing the system of beliefs, they often focused on what they considered to be "pathological" aspects of the culture.

Anthropologists were more likely to approach cultures as integrated wholes, but many of them, being men, were unable to obtain certain information about female members of the groups. The majority of their works concurred with the general belief that women were in a position decidedly subordinate to men, and tended to treat them as a residual category, ascribed an inferior status at birth which was to predetermine their fate for life, regardless of individual capabilities. In theory they were perhaps justified in their assumptions, owing to the central importance of the male as food provider, but there is always a gap between theory and practice and it is important to investigate how closely one approximates the other. Lowie, discussing the concept of status, points out that treatment of women is one aspect of the matter, legal status another, and opportunities for public action another.

"Great caution must be used in summing up female status in any one society. The conditions involved in the relations of men and women are many-sided and it is dangerous to overweight one particular phase of them. Least of all should excessive importance be attached to theory. Theory may and does affect practice but only in moderate degree." (Lowie, 1920:188)

Jenness, in his classic volume The Indians of Canada portrays the

women of various tribes as leading a miserable existence with little opportunity to enjoy life: "...their lives were full of drudgery at all times and their status was very inferior" (1967:52) As Cooper (1935) points out, "status" includes so many divergent and frequently conflicting elements that generalizations become hazardous. He suggests five such indices: domestic, economic, social, religious and political. While one can refer to the status of a person with reference to a specific index at a given time in a given situation, it is unlikely that any one woman would rank consistently high or low in all these areas of behavior even in any given band, much less between tribes. It may well be that the male role lends itself to greater integration of these indices than does the female role and thus gives the illusion of control in all spheres.

Women in all societies have been excluded from certain activities, usually those defined by men as more interesting and more important. However, bypasses exist in any ongoing system and identification of these leads to greater understanding of how the system operates. Division of a society into a limited number of roles engenders strains and mechanisms arise to prevent these from bursting into outright hostility.

The varied cultures of the Indian people provided women with limited but recognizable alternatives both in terms of formal and informal avenues of advancement. In addition to sex, age was an important criterion for organizing social responsibilities: at puberty, marriage, childbirth, and menopause a woman was called on to assume a role which carried clearly defined new role expectations. On the Pacific coast lived semi-sedentary tribes with vast food

surpluses providing them with the time and means for a rich ceremonial life and a clearly stratified society. Women born into a high ranking family were automatically accorded recognition, but others could achieve it less formally by gaining wisdom, and knowledge of the supernatural. Among the buffalo hunting tribes of the Plains, the Sun-Dance festival was held only in honour of a woman's vow to purchase a sacred medicine bundle and such a woman and her husband shared fame and respect. Premarital chastity was demanded by the Blackfoot and Sarcee for women and severe punishment was meted out to deviants. But a woman known to be virtuous in these terms was accorded respect in the community. Because men spent so much time away from home hunting on the Plains, many women assumed the role which Driver calls the "manly hearted woman" in disciplining their children. For this reason, Driver (1961) suggests that on the Plains, the Oedipus hostility was directed toward the mother. In the north and east migratory hunting groups eked out a meagre existence and therefore lacked elaborate political and religious organizations. Here a woman was respected in terms of personal qualities such as her generosity and her ability to work hard.

Two polar extremes have often been cited in discussions of the status of women in traditional Indian society and a tendency to focus on either of these has formed the basis for a good deal of unreliable generalization about Indian women. These are the Iroquoian peoples in the southeast, where women enjoyed considerable prestige, and the Chipewyan, an Athapaskan speaking group in the northwest of Canada where women were not so well treated.

The five Iroqueian tribes were organized into a series of exogamic clans with descent traced through the female line. Long bark houses (containing up to 20 families) were supervised by a matron, an elderly female who was regarded as family head. The overall Council (which has served as a model for the League of Nations) was composed of fifty chiefs or sachems nominated by the matron in consultation with the women of her clan. The matron could depose her nominee if he proved unsatisfactory. However the formal power was in the hands of men who had to ratify her choice of sachem, and no women were on the council. Although this has sometimes been designated as a matriarchate (a state which Lewis and others have discounted as non-existent) it appears more likely as Jenness suggests that it was a male oligarchy with special powers vested in one woman who was family head. The comparatively high status of Iroqueian women was in great part due to their position as agriculturists. Much of the Iroquois' success in war has been attributed to the fact that women did the cultivation and thus maintained a relatively sedentary population while men were freed for war. Women also built the houses and canoes and manufactured tools and weapons. An Indian historian, Mrs. Ethel Brant Monture, who is Mohawk, has pointed out that Iroqueian women formed the first service club in North America (The Three Sisters) in 1600, and were instrumental in bringing into existence the first Temperance Society among Indians.

On the other hand, the Chipewyan were notorious for their brutal treatment of women. Jenness (1967:386) describes it thus:

"They were separated from all boy companions at the age of 8 or 9, married at adolescence often to middle aged men and were always subject to many restrictions. They were the first to perish in seasons of scarcity. In winter they were more animals

unaided as they dragged the heavy toboggans. In the summer, they were pack animals, carrying household goods, food and hides on their backs."

Yet other accounts tell us that when these women did run away with non-Indian traders, they usually returned in a short time. It took Samuel Hearne three attempts to reach Corenation Gulf and his guide Matenabbe attributed the success of his third venture to the fact that he took women along to help (Oswald, 1966:23). The men were incapable of making the voyage without the assistance of women on whom they were so dependent. In this context it is significant that in 1967 in Churchill, Manitoba, a memorial was raised to a Chipewyan woman taken prisoner by the Crees in 1713. Documentation in the Hudson Bay Archives credits her with intervening as an intermediary in a long existing feud between the Chipewyans and the Crees which ended in a peace and establishment of Fort Churchill. (Edmonton Jnl. Dec. 14, 1967)

The complex reality of the status of women in these two tribes escapes easy understanding, and these tribes are only two of a large number in Canada.

A principle advanced in modern physics puts the notion of determinism into broader perspective. Niels Bohr's treatment of the concept of relativity (1966) stresses that the extent to which physical phenomena can be observed adequately depends on the frame of reference of the observer. Quantum mechanics, which assumes a wholeness in the atomic process, substitutes a frame of reference which goes beyond elementary determinism, so that evidence which appears inconsistent and contradictory at one level becomes complementary at a higher level becomes complementary at a higher level. The same principle applies to human cultures. Integrity of a culture presupposes a wholeness and

in order to understand the way of life of a people we must understand the total framework within which they live and work. By substituting the idea of complementarity for rigid categories of dominance and submission, we see women assuming interdependent partnership with men, each exercising control over different spheres of activity and working as a team whose roles facilitate one another in co-operation towards a common goal. Given the assumption of interdependence, women gained status in this way and interpretations cannot be made outside this framework.

Lowie suggests that the proposition that a woman's status is a sure index of cultural advancement is utterly at variance with the ethnographic data. Personality loses importance as a determinant in more complex cultures where status becomes institutionalized. Flannery (1935) compares the position of Eastern Cree women with that of Iroquois and finds it equally prestigious. An Iroquoian woman owned her fields and produce. An Eastern Cree woman who belonged to a migratory band had ownership to, and the right to dispose of, game once it was brought to the lodge. Cree women had as much right to decide whom their daughters would marry as did Iroquoian women. While the latter exercised considerable control in ceremonial activity, neither ritual nor politics played an important part in Eastern Cree life, since the mobile family was the functioning unit. Burgesse (1944) found that although a Montaignais woman was theoretically inferior to her husband, she was often the dominant partner. He points out that traders were well aware of the influence she had on her husband's choice of trapping ground and were careful to flatter her.

The tie between mother and children was most important since it was she who gave them their earliest training. The relationship between mother and daughter was of a very permanent nature especially where after marriage the girl and her husband stayed with her family group. Matrilineality, where it occurred, did not mean that the woman herself had more power, only that she had the distinct advantage of protection by her kin group.

Brideprice has sometimes been interpreted as an indication that women were considered primarily as an economic commodity who were 'bought' by their prospective husbands. Benedict (1960:166) points out that what was bought was not the woman but rather the prerogatives which she had a right to pass on to her children.

Polygamy was in theory widespread, but in practice it was limited to areas where there was a surplus of women, or where a man could afford to support more than one wife. This proved a sound economic principle in that few were left uncared for. The custom of adopting captive women into the local group, common to Iroquois, Cree and some Athapaskan speaking peoples was an efficient way of increasing the size of the community and gaining women who could serve as intermediaries and interpreters, where necessary.

Landes is one of the few anthropologists who has made a comprehensive study of Indian women. (Landes, 1938) She found that among the Ojibwa, institutionalized social norms applied mostly to the activities of men, while female activity was never so rigidly regulated. Men's roles were more public and were culturally defined as more interesting and more important. As on the Plains, formal praise was reserved for men's achievements and part of the woman's

role was to be a spectator and provide men with this coveted recognition. Men were trained with specific goals in mind, such as bravery and initiative, and achieved status in the structured system which they themselves had established by adhering to learned rules. Women learned more informally from association with their mother and other women, and were taught to take domestic initiatives in ways complementary to men; however, because of the absence of rigidly imposed rules about the conduct of the ideal woman, they had greater latitude in defining areas in which they wished to operate. "Women who perform masculine work do so with a feeling that they are assuming an additional role, one that is defined as unusually difficult, but one which for them is surrounded with no status aura" (Ibid:135). She found that women developed a culture distinct from that of men transferring certain male values, such as bravery to their own activities. Women neither competed with men, nor considered themselves subjugated by them, but rather carried out certain responsibilities and obligations in return for certain rights and privileges.

Much interpretation of the traditional roles of Indian women can only be speculative, since most ethnographies were compiled well after the contact period. It would seem that the whole question of status has been overemphasized in an unrealistic attempt to quantify data, and that a subject of greater interest would be the execution of role in the specific culture. In general men defined the positions in the social structure and occupied them. They dictated the rules which consequently bound them. Women had a greater variety of unstandardized channels available to them and were able to exercise individual initiative to a greater extent. This lack of formulation in their role may

well have equipped them for adaptation to certain aspects of social change.

THE NEED FOR RESEARCH:

Within recent years, the Federal Government has become aware of the need to conduct research prior to introducing programs of planned social change. In a male dominated and male oriented society, the government has been concerned primarily with areas most susceptible to administration and has tended to focus on the social and economic roles of man and on the formal education of children. In many resulting studies, women are overlooked or, at best, given peripheral treatment as family members. Where they are considered at greater length, there is a tendency to focus on alcoholism, prostitution and illegitimacy, and to treat these in a pathological sense rather than to consider stabilizing influences women may have.

Women are the ones left on the reserves when men leave for wage employment, and children for school. Because they receive information from men, children and each other, they are often in the best position to know what is happening. This is recognized on a number of Indian reserves: as of March 18, 1968, there were 10 female chiefs and 174 female councillors in Canada. (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) In general, when reference is made to the "loss of Indian culture" this is stated in terms of the men's roles as economic provider; women's displacement from traditional tasks has been less drastic than has men's but there is still a gap to be filled.

Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson (1958) suggested that the whole question of sex and status deserved study. In the recent Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada (Hawthorn, 1966) the authors used as a main source of data a Resources Questionnaire which the Economic

Development Division of the Indian Affairs Branch prepared and distributed in 1964. This questionnaire does not separate men from women, though such information, if available would be extremely valuable. The recently published report Indians and the Law (Canadian Corrections Association, 1967) deals little with the problems faced by women. The Advisory Commission on the Development of Government in the Northwest Territories also known as the Carrothers Commission (Canada, 1965) involved relatively few women: only 6 of the 47 briefs and 10 of the 144 submissions were presented by women although the Commission was dealing with social and economic changes which would greatly affect the woman's position in the family. Because of a structured British tradition and post-war policy of veteran preference, the number of women employed in responsible positions in the Indian Affairs Branch has been limited until recent years.

The tendency to lump adult Indians as an undifferentiated group and the failure to recognise that different policies evoke different responses from women than from men has created difficulties which might have been circumvented had the planners considered the interests of both sexes. This has been costly not only in financial but in human terms. Assessment of relocation projects among Eskimos (Stevenson, 1967) and Indians (Bond, 1968) show that lack of success in many ways can largely be attributed to psychological strains experienced by women. Unlike their husbands who were employed in new wage work, these women had no formal model to follow and continued to behave as though they were in a northern situation. Discontent and boredom on the part of women has caused serious problems in adjusting to their new setting.

Twenty Indian families were brought to Elliot Lake because of access to housing, employment, and a Centre for Continuing Education. Material advantages were made readily available to them but the modern conveniences meant that none of women's usual work was necessary or even possible to fill the day, and that tasks formerly done in groups had to be done alone. Classes in instruction were given to the women between 9 and 11 in the evening. Because the women were not content they could give their husbands no encouragement. The film Relocation at Elliot Lake (National Film Board, 1967) examines certain aspects of the programme in its initial stages. There was little attempt by the townspeople interviewed to welcome them and the idea that if they were going to be accepted they must use "our rules and our point of view" was expressed. Women were shown in an unfamiliar classroom situation being advised by a female councillor not to buy tight clothes and to wear a good girdle. Such values were meaningless in terms of past experience: as long as they were being taught that they must do all the changing, there was no possibility of contributions on their part. Nine of the original twenty families in this project returned to their reserve, although greater success was achieved with later families when the approach was revised. Failure of the original project was attributed by many of the townspeople to apathy on the Indians' part. What they failed to recognize is that their so-called "apathy" signifies the minimal importance attached to the material values of the non-Indian culture, when these conflict with their own perceived needs of co-operation, sociability and meaningful activity.

Innovation in Change:

Certain cross-cultural and historical evidence of situations in which the woman's role has undergone considerable reinterpretation suggests the hypothesis that when the structure of a society is rapidly altered, and a crisis is perceived, men become voluntarily or involuntarily drawn into new kinds of activity, and opportunities for women expand. As men assume new responsibilities and obligations they will of necessity relinquish control over areas which they formerly governed, thereby leaving certain niches available for women. As early as the Punic wars, women gained experience in running the institutions left behind when men moved into battle. During the first World War barriers against women in industry were lowered as men joined the armed forces. The suffragettes who had originally been actively anti-war now expressed willingness to contribute to the war effort and were enabled to move into areas where they could prove their ability to work as well as men. As their capabilities were recognized in the economic sphere, there came an accompanying acceptance of their rights in social and political spheres. (See Nettingham, 1947) Crises such as war and depression do influence long term trends for redefinition of the woman's role.

The critical state perceived by Canadian Indians is of a different kind but it is extremely important in the overall pattern of change in Canada. As the impact of change is felt at the local level, new tensions and strains impinge on the family. Those men who are earning wages spend more and more time away from the reserve or village. Women traditionally ascribed a more conservative role than men, have less to lose

and more to gain by trying to achieve in the new system and are often in a position to innovate and create new roles for themselves. Chance describes innovation as:

"a process by which new cultural elements are added or elements are altered in their function, their form or their meaning...the central innovative process is reinterpretation or recombination.. The culture is "expanding", new "needs" have to be filled and new "functions" emerge: addition rather than replacement seems to be prevalent, although the second is by no means absent. This is the problem of "continuity and change", of what remains the same and what is altered over a defined period of time."(Chance, 1966:27)

At the United Nations Conference on the Application of Science and Technology for the Benefit of Less Developed Areas (1963) the statement was made that:

"The burden of reconciling family life with the new patterns of urban life rests on women, traditionally the upholders of custom and conservatism in codes of behavior. More flexibility of mind is demanded of the wife than of the husband. The responsibility of bridging the gap between the old culture patterns and the new ones lies with the woman. Little attention has been given to the need to prepare women for family life in change; indeed little is known about the new role of women in general." (United Nations, 1963:143)

At first glance, innovation and conservatism would seem to be diametrically opposed approaches to social change; yet the usefulness of the "conservative innovator" has been demonstrated in a number of countries undergoing modernization. (See Bennett, 1967:chapter 11) Innovation can often be carried out most successfully by those who can work within the existing framework and avoid resistance of established interests. This in turn requires an understanding of the limitations within which one works and the ability to bridge the culture gap. Volatile women who demand change will no doubt meet greater resistance from their people than will those who are able to adapt individually to new circumstances and provide a less threatening model

for others.

It is valuable to look at this in context of other parts of the world. Few nations have resolved the equivocal interpretations of the "status" of their women. Legislation varies, but such theoretical rights are meaningless unless women are given the freedom to express and act on their opinions. In Eastern Europe there has been an attempt to complement legislation with programmes which actually provide women with the opportunity to innovate.

"The goal now is not the adaptation of women to a man's world, nor the equating of men and women. It is to evaluate the abilities of women and to create for them conditions which will permit their full participation in society." (Chylinska, 1968:71)

The January, 1968 issue of the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science was devoted to an assessment of the position of women throughout the world. There is a tendency in these articles for women in western society to espouse the competitive ethic and to be concerned with the quantitative rates of their formal participation in positions of political power. In the newly developing countries there is greater interest in trying to define complementary roles women can take effectively within the existing framework. Rakasataya (1968) suggests that this urge to compete seems most prominent in countries where women made a late entry into a political system set up by men. In the west, equality of the sexes has often emerged as an ethical question of rights to be fought for, apart from any more fundamental issues.

The competitive ethic has little precedent in Canadian Indian society or in other cultures where women traditionally worked through the medium of the family and apparently judged this adequate to meet

their needs. In the Middle East and Africa women had a number of traditional restrictions which still greatly limit activity outside the home, yet many of the new regimes effectively work for political reforms through women's associations. (See Unger, 1968; Brooks, 1968) In Japan more than 40% of the women over the age of 20 belong to one or more women's organizations. (Fugita, 1968) The Japanese Ministry of Agriculture has a staff of 1000 female officials who work with rural women in their homes giving advice and demonstrations, helping to organize co-operatives, cooking centres, day nurseries, laundries and health centres. (Lanier, 1968) In Papua and New Guinea, education courses were set up for married couples to introduce the concepts of the fundamental equality of men and women and to explain theoretical and practical aspects of community development including how the government worked at both central and local levels. In Fiji a "woman's interest program" led to the proliferation of women's clubs and widened interest in their role in the community. (Nerris, 1968) In Ceylon, 1000 students registered for a course in food preservation and then returned to their communities to teach others; consequently tons of food were saved and women became aware of what such savings could mean. (Lanier, 1968) In areas all over the world, such projects as literacy classes, vocational training, public speaking, leadership training, sanitation, family planning, voting procedures, budgeting, etc. are being organized through women's groups. It would appear that in many countries the government has attempted to communicate with the people through women as intermediaries, the methods depending directly on the cultural background.

The number and diversity of ways in which women are being involved

in the development process elsewhere in the world provides some ideas for Indian women in Canada.

However, some crucial questions have first to be answered.

Defining the Margin of Choice:

Two major questions emerge in considering the extent to which Indian women are able to operate within the existing framework:

1. To what extent can women locate areas of stress and identify possible solutions?
2. What margin of choice does an Indian woman see available to her and how does she increase this margin?

Many Indian women are finding that in order to operate within the existing Canadian context as individuals, a comparative basis is necessary. A possibility being tested in southern Canada is that of collusion with the explicit purpose of exchanging ideas and discussing problems.

Homemakers Clubs gained recognition first in Saskatchewan between 1910 and 1917, not as an Indian group but as a medium through which suffragists diffused propaganda aimed at extension of voting privileges to women. (Cleverdon, 1950) The idea was adopted by the Indian Affairs Branch in 1937, Indian Homemakers Clubs came into being in the same province. Subsequently these spread to other provinces between 1941 and 1946 under Branch sponsorship with the expressed purpose of involving women in community action. In November, 1955, there were 163 of these groups in Canada; by 1956 a record of 185 was reached. Ten years later only 86 were still wholly or partly active. By January of 1968, the number had risen to 125 (IAB). The Branch sees these clubs as the primary medium of communication with Indian women. There are now, in Canada, 2274 reserves (77 of which are Indian settlements not classified as reserves), and more than 54,000 Indian women over the age of sixteen. The small number of Homemaker's Clubs obviously cannot function as a major means of communication.

Beyond this, there is the problem of "administration". The Branch is pressured to produce observable programmes which are statistically impressive, and the tendency is to assume a logical way to do this by organizing a structured group. The trend in Homemakers Clubs show difficulties involved in trying to do this through "the administration." General lack of interest in these clubs in the east has been attributed by many women in part to IAB control and non-Indian leadership. The original constitution of 1950 was rigid in outline and provided little scope for involvement. The emphasis on a constitution is representative of a shift from the oral to the written tradition (the precedent being the Indian Act) and to the doctrine that rules, once written down will be observed. A number of problems involved in mobilizing such groups and encouraging participation were discussed at a workshop of 14 delegates from Homemakers Clubs in Ontario (Feb. 19-22, 1968) at which the primary purpose was to change this constitution. Some difficulties that were discussed at length at the workshop indicated the dilemma of using the clubs as vehicles of change.

On many reserves the club is a focal point for women leaders active in other groups such as the P. T. A., Community Development Association, Home and School Association, church groups, etc. All of these work within a framework set up by the church, school or IAB. Although the Homemakers Club is a potentially flexible organization on the reserve, its usefulness in easing the strains of change depends on the club's ability to operate independently of outside controls. Otherwise they may be perceived by other women either as a superfluous group or a puppet organization. Active community leadership is often suspect and may lead to accusations of publicity.

seeking.

In groups with a small membership there is a tendency to family control, with women enlisting daughters and daughters-in-law to support them and their projects. To the extent that club activity is interpreted as a family faction, other women may refuse to join.

The generation gap may cause problems of co-ordinating aims and leadership. On one northern reserve, a club was very active at one time; as younger women joined, a schism developed, elder women left, finances were exhausted and the club became inactive. Meanwhile an independent group was begun by 12 women who raised money by marketing craftwork. Such an alternative was seen as more satisfying in that it bypassed outside control.

On reserves close to urban centres women state that as cars, buses, binges, television and alcohol become accessible, community activity declines. As the concept of navigable space increases, the local reserve loses its former position as a focus of interest.

Conflicting responsibilities may prevent women who work or married women with children from participating because of other time commitments. Frequently husbands object to their wives attending such meetings. On a reserve in B. C. one club resolved this latter difficulty by enrolling their husbands as members.

These problems are by no means unique to organizations of Indian women and represent problems which must be overcome in any community action program.

As in other matters, concerning Indians IAB has often attempted to guide women by imposing aims and goals from outside. Not a little of this can be attributed to subtle competition between provincial

divisions to see "whose Indians are doing best". This was brought to my attention by two women working at provincial levels who considered it a major pressure in their work. The definition of "best" creates problems. At the policy level it is now stated that the trend is to encourage women to reformulate their goals and become more independent in outlook. In practice much of this independence which is emerging is not welcomed by Senior Branch officials. One Indian woman, employed in a responsible position at the Ottawa level, was released from duty shortly after she participated in a march which resulted from a conference of native women in Alberta. The stress between the head office and the field staff that marks all bureaucracies has become increasingly evident in recent years as change at the centre and change at the edges has proceeded at different paces. This was further demonstrated recently in British Columbia when a Branch employee who had made considerable strides in adult education working directly with British Columbia Homemakers was removed from the field despite the protests of the women. The incident touched off a much more general protest march in Vancouver in June of 1968 which was supported by all 52 Homemakers clubs in that province.

Development implies making comparisons. Indian women who attend conferences come away with new ideas and new impressions of how to behave. Traditional societies were, in the main, isolated societies with few opportunities for comparison. The conferences provide opportunities for the continuation of the oral tradition and dialogue. Of the conference of Indian women in Saskatchewan (Nov. 6-10, 1967) it was said "Although many of the 60 delegates had never attended a conference or spoken in public before, they weren't hesitant about

speaking up. No punches were pulled and no subject was taboo".

(Regina Leader Post, Nov. 10, 1967) Having had the individual experiences of finding solutions to daily problems on their own reserves, the dialogue permitted at a conference gave them an opportunity to see their own situation in a larger context, moving it from a local to a regional frame of reference. At this conference there was discussion about such issues as living conditions, child neglect, old age, recreation, alcoholism, illegitimacy, education, school dropouts, need for pre- and post-natal care and need for community leadership. (Sask. Indian Women's Report, 1967) The women seemed to become aware, as these issues were more clearly defined, of their roles and responsibilities in solving their own problems. Speakers stressed the important role women had played in the past and could play in the future. Statements made by an Indian woman speaker included:

"the Indian nation as never before in its life-span needs the services, the abilities, the understanding, the backbone and the tongues of Indian women."

and "...it is time for us Indian women to loosen our tongues, to speak out, and it is time for us to give our children a better break and a happier home life." (Mrs. Mary Ann Lavallee: p.10)

This attempt to create group consciousness was strengthened by a male Indian speaker:

"Our culture is that women should be in the home, but in this day and age when modern life is so complicated and Indian people are being called on to enter the mainstream of society, we need teamwork. Both the Indian husband and wife need each others resources to make a good home. So the male and female outlook in the composition of the council is necessary today...This partnership is needed. Team approach is a must." (Mr. Ahab Spence: p.8)

The meeting was concerned not only with social but also with

political roles, and a brief was drawn up and presented to the Saskatchewan Minister of Welfare requesting that child welfare services be transferred from Federal to Provincial jurisdiction and extended to Indian reserves.

The Alberta Native Women's Conference was an even more dramatic success in the participants' terms in that it included both Indian and Metis women, and directly involved more native women from the initial stages of planning. The necessity to look for qualities of women in the past in order to redefine the role of women in the future was again stressed by speakers. This recurrent theme is not dissimilar to that of Buckminster Fuller in his assessment of the role of 21st century women. (Fuller, 1968:13)

"It is one of these facts of our experience that when we try to think into the future our thoughts jump backward. It may well be that nature has some fundamental law by which opening up what we call the future also automatically opens up the past in equal degree...I am convinced that the best predictions regarding women in the twenty-first century will be arrived at through reviewing the largest possible sweep in history."

Again this outlook returns to the concept of a woman's potential as a conservative innovater. Women were pinpointed at the conference as the logical ones to increase the amount of communication between Indian and non-Indian and thus make a major step toward understanding and exchange of knowledge.

The most significant aspect of the conference was the ability demonstrated by the women to move directly from theory to action. The conference coincided with the announcement by the government (Mar. 8, 1968) that medical and health services for Indians might be

¹
I am grateful to Mrs. Jean Goodwill for an opportunity to listen to tapes of the conference.

curtailed. About two hundred and fifty women participants marched on the Provincial Legislature and presented a brief protesting the fact that Federal and Provincial governments were currently negotiating an issue which directly affected Indian people without consulting the latter and were considering Indian people as a "moral obligation" rather than as human beings.

The conference in our society had come to represent a gathering which seldom achieves concrete results. Discussion generally remains at the theoretical level participation and is at best cathartic. The ability to move from theory to practice, so unusual today in a society where the breach is becoming artificially widened, was demonstrated by these women in efforts to achieve immediate practical results rather than to speak simply in terms of far-reaching abstract goals. In addition they prepared a brief to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women compiled from ideas in a suggestion box. The twenty eight recommendations focused on extension of health services and requests for information about existing services, educational reform both at child and adult levels, and further identified a number of areas where technical advice and assistance were needed. It is significant that none of the recommendations dealt with issues concerning only women, the focus being on family and community. As one of the participants explained later:

"White women are concerned with issues like divorce and abortion. We aren't ready for that. We have much more immediate needs that involve the whole reserve and consider these problems much more relevant."

Access to the mass news media enabled these women to disseminate messages beyond the immediate group to the general public.

"News reporting was good", one of the participants stated, "but no one could possibly convey the feeling that was there when we came from isolated reserves and suddenly met women who felt the same way we did. It's one thing to write 'Indian Women march in Pretest' and another to know what it meant."

The crucial accomplishment here was the ability to broaden their individual comparative bases and channel the results of accumulated tension into concerted activity toward a common goal that they had defined themselves. As such, the conference became a tool for the mobilization of group strength which gained urgency and expressed itself in immediate demands for change. Stress is beneficial when it leads to a search for alternatives, but without recognizable results in return, it will be redirected in other less positive ways.

Possibilities for Off-Reserve Innovation:

Individually, a number of women are finding it possible to increase their comparative experience by moving off the reserve to urban centres. Lagasse (1959) dealt extensively with problems that native women faced in Winnipeg: the majority were not equipped with the education or experience to prepare them for city life. On the other hand, an increasing number of women are now coming as students or in professional capacities to the city and find considerable diversity in choices of action. One young native woman who came south from the Northwest Territories explained that she considered it necessary for Indian young people to understand aspects of both the Indian and non-Indian culture prior to deciding what kind of life they wanted to chose. It is often among women who have experienced the difficulties of transition from the reserve to the city and who have been able to adjust to this, that the greatest scope for innovation comes.

These women are women of two worlds - the traditional and the modern. They can be seen as "entre-aides" in the processes of change. Paine (1967) discusses the role of the "culture broker", and defines him or her as "one who purveys values from one group or another with purposeful changes of emphasis and/or content". It is often easier for a woman to move from the Indian to the non-Indian culture and to stay there than it is for a man. Indian women, by marrying non-Indian men, lose their Indian status and inevitably leave the reserve. No matter who an Indian man marries, he always remains an Indian. Women who have been exposed to both cultures,

through marriage or less formal associations, are frequently able and willing to bridge the culture gap and to interpret the values which they consider important from one culture to another in an intermediary position. They can select from the two cultures. In many cases these women feel marginal to both cultures: their ability to sort the myths from the facts fosters conflicting identities. They are often advised to "go back to the reserve and help their people", yet they recognise an equally great need for education off the reserve. A number of these women have indicated strongly that their goal is to reverse the usual process of teaching the Indians and rather, to educate the "Whiteman" to listen. At the same time they are willing to learn certain aspects of the non-Indian culture in order to strengthen the usefulness of their intermediate position. Of three native female University students with whom I discussed this topic, one was studying economics, another history, and a third had been accepted at a Canadian University to study Political Science. The non-Indian system of government which has been imposed on them is interpreted as a game in which the rules are largely undefined and which involves elements of both strategy and chance. In order to maximize the former and minimize the latter, they recognize the value of combining their own knowledge of how the rules are used with the technical knowledge of how they can be used. The way in which these women interpret and act out their roles as "entre-aides" or "culture brokers" varies greatly, depending on their personality, the area in which they live, and the groups and individuals with whom they choose to work.

A number of women have taken the role of animators by speaking out publicly, in order to increase the general level of awareness about problems Indian people face. To the extent that they realize that no one is qualified to speak on behalf of Indians as a whole, the most effective act less as spokesmen for Indian people than as instigators. One Indian woman who discussed this was organizing a program for rural girls coming to Toronto to introduce them to the 'rituals' she herself faced when she first came from a reserve - filling in application forms, using transportation facilities, etc. She included both Indian and non-Indian girls to break down the dichotomy between them. Another girl had organized a group of Indian students in her city to give them personal contact with one another and a chance to discuss common difficulties. One woman who headed a Friendship Centre, co-edited an Indian newspaper and has done extensive public speaking and lectured in a University Community Development course in Ottawa. Another woman worked with her husband on a northern Ontario reserve for a year conducting adult education courses. She is currently providing technical assistance to a group of Indian women on a reserve in Quebec who are organizing a program to teach the Algonkian language to their children. None of these is an isolated instance, but rather each is representative of the diverse roles Indian women are defining for themselves in cities throughout Canada. Common to all these women is their unwillingness to work within the limited confines of a system where aims and goals are established by outside authorities.

SECTION 11: THE YUKON

Further elaboration of innovative roles which women are assuming in Canada risks the difficulty of ignoring the conditions which produced the changes. In the north, the transition from the stone age to the jet age is being experienced by a single generation. The north cannot be separated from the larger Canadian context, but compressed rates of change there have made the problem more acute. In Canada as a whole, Indians comprise one percent of the population; in the Yukon registered Indians alone account for 20% of the total and there are a considerable number of persons of Indian ancestry who are not registered.

The Historical Context:

Indians living in the Yukon lack the distinct tribal affiliations more common in southern Canada. With the exception of three villages designated as 'inland Tlingit' at Teslin, Carcross and Atlin (the latter in northern B. C.), an isolated Kutchin band at Old Crow, and Tahltans in northern B. C. who also come under the jurisdiction of the Yukon Indian Agency, they are a heterogeneous agglomeration. Any common identity derives from a similar traditional past involving seasonal hunting and gathering with loose contact between migrating groups, a common technology developed in response to the rigorous demands of the physical environment, a shared phratry system stemming from that of the Tlingit, and to a certain extent, a common Athapaskan language structure which is fast disappearing or being modified even among older people. Linguistic considerations seem to have been the paramount criterion for their earliest classification. (Osgeed, 1934, 1936) The completion of the Alaska highway in 1943, and the

disappearance of the steamboats from the rivers has localized the Yukon Indians in settlements along the highway and the road to Mayo and Dawson. Today, the majority identify themselves in relation to the village in which they live, rather than by a tribal designation.

It would appear that considerable dissemination of customs took place between Tlingit and Athapaskan speaking peoples through early trading contacts. Significant here is matrilineal descent which originated among the Tlingit in Southern Alaska and spread south to the Tahltan and inland to the Tutchone, Kutchin and Nahani populations. Briefly, the Tlingit were divided into two exogamic matrilineal moieties based on real or putative kinship with mutual obligations toward one another which assumed greatest importance at ceremonial potlaches. Although patrilineal sib recognition did exist across the Crow (alternately Raven or Eagle) and Wolf moieties, a man was linked with his mother's kin for descent and inheritance. (See McClellan, 1954) Tanner attributes considerable spread of custom to the fact that the entrepreneurial Tlingit traders stabilized trading relations by offering Tlingit women to Athapaskan men as marriage partners. Such links between hostile groups served to prevent the outbreak of open war in many cases by loosely linking Athapaskans into the system of kinship obligations:

"...it turns on the point that marriages took place between Tlingits and Athapaskans, or more importantly that Tlingit women married Athapaskan men because women are structurally more important in the matrilineal kinship system. Such marriages were more numerous than the other kind and more important and enduring since the practice of Tlingit men marrying inland women was associated with other temporary liaisons, such as stealing or borrowing women which took place during trading expeditions. Those men who did marry inland did not take their wives back with them and thus they rarely

saw them.." (Tanner, 1965:29)

Although the moiety system of descent reckoning is fading, it has not entirely disappeared, especially in the Tlingit villages. Among the women who remained at home and have not undergone prolonged separation from their parents in residential schools there is still recognition that they are either Crew or Wolf, that they are more closely linked with their mother's kin than with their father's, and consequently, a marriage between two Crews or two Wolves has incestuous implications. The folklore associated with their particular moiety can still be recounted by many women over 35 but they recognize that the children are losing interest in it; one woman noted "they hear from the white kids that it's just Indian superstition and they get embarrassed about it". Discussions with several girls at a Whitehorse student residence confirmed this. Most girls are unaware of the moiety to which they belong and those who are acknowledge that it has no significance for their friends. "At first I was really shocked when I came here because my mother had always taught me that it was really important" one girl admitted. "Most of the girls didn't even seem to know what I was talking about when I said I was Crew. I guess that it's really not all that important anymore."

Several discussions with women of different age groups further substantiated this trend, linking it with urbanization rather than with age. A 39 year old Tlingit woman who lives in a village and identifies strongly with her own moiety admits that she is suspicious of members of the opposite moiety. The decline in ceremonial reciprocity has broken down interdependence between the two groups and seems in some cases to have been replaced by a certain lack of trust. She

herself is married to a non-Indian. Another woman of about the same age who lives in the city married an Indian man from a different tribe but of the same moiety fourteen years ago. Although her parents and some of the elder people in her village registered disapproval they did not forbid the union. It is perhaps significant that she lives in town and does not plan to tell her children about the moiety divisions. A 20 year old woman who lived with her parents in the village until her marriage to a non-Indian mentioned that her mother would have been very upset had she married someone from the same moiety. In contrast a girl of the same age who moved from the village to attend high school and has remained in town since that time has been dating a man from the same tribal background as herself for some time. She states that although her mother knows that they may marry eventually, she has never asked his moiety affiliation and the couple themselves has never discussed it.

Although one of the woman's major roles traditionally was to choose a husband for her daughter, voluntary mate selection has replaced this and arranged marriages are non-existent. One woman recalled that as late as 1944, when she was 15 years old, a husband was chosen for her and she rejected him in order to be able to choose her own partner.

Certain conflicts experienced elsewhere in Canada were avoided in the Yukon. The majority of the native population remained detached observers during the Gold Rush (1896-98) and after the goldseekers left they expressed interest in learning certain aspects of the White-man's technology. Innovation became necessary in adaptation and Indian women sometimes married Whitemen in a continuing process of stabilization

and alliance. However, as elsewhere in the country, with the Whiteman came disease. The 1895 census estimated the Indian population at 2600. By 1912 the Indian population was 1838 and in 1929 it sank to 1264. By 1965 the population figure was 2460 and indications are that it is growing steadily. (The Yukon Today, 1968: p.1) The number of persons born Indian and later enfranchised brings the total considerably higher. In addition there are a growing number of persons of mixed blood who identify themselves and are identified by non-Indians as "Indian". Non-Indians seldom concern themselves with legalisms on this matter: an Indian is someone who "behaves like an Indian". The Yukon Indian Agency also includes an estimated 1000 additional Indians in northern B. C. Although they may have remained peripheral to the Gold Rush and the Alaska highway construction, the native population can no longer be ignored today. Their future is more intimately linked with the Yukon than is that of many of the non-Indian entrepreneurs who plan to 'clean up and clear out'.

The Indian Act (Gov't of Canada, 1952) which was arbitrarily structured to correspond with the social structure of some Indian tribes in southern Canada exhibits some startling inconsistencies when applied to the Yukon. Although traditionally there were no "bands" in the Yukon, sixteen were created in the interests of administrative expediency. No formal hierarchies existed traditionally beyond the family unit (except among the coastal Tlingit migrants) and the chief, too, became a Whiteman's innovation. A chief was a handy person for the distant Ottawa-based bureaucracy to deal with; he became someone who could translate government aims to the band

but not vice versa. No treaties were signed in the Yukon and no reserves exist. Areas are set aside for Indians, but these are not reserves in the legal sense. This causes considerable confusion in legislative matters when, for example, Indians are charged with liquor offenses under the Indian Act (sect. 94b) and fined for alcohol consumption off a non-existent reserve. There are no band funds in the Yukon. Most confusing is the legal definition whereby "Indianness" is traced through the paternal line by Whiteman's Law and through the maternal line by Indian custom.

The Effects on Men:

Provision of financial assistance to Indians as direct relief, aid to dependent children, and educational facilities, in addition to such services as family allowance, old age pension, unemployment and disability insurance available to all Canadians (though referred to as "welfare" when applied to the Indian population) has had different effects on men and on women. Social welfare programs were never co-ordinated with programs of economic development, and do little more than maintain the family at a minimal level of subsistence, especially in the north where food prices are substantially increased by transportation and other costs.

For women the original transitional period was less drawn out as they were able to live longer within the protective circle of primary relationships. Indian men have been forced to compete economically with Whitemen and with a few notable exceptions, lack the skills defined as necessary in the north today. Efforts to make them "productive citizens" without specifying just what is to be produced, and for whom, results in their being absorbed into jobs at the bottom of the economic hierarchy which offer little of the psychological satisfaction provided by their traditional roles. As McLuhan aptly notes:

"Work, however, does not exist in the non-literate world. The primitive hunter and fisherman did no work any more than does the poet, painter or thinker of today. Where the whole man is involved there is no work. (1964:138)

In the north perhaps more than in the rest of Canada, the alternative of hunting and trapping is still recognised by some men as a possibility, but many younger men no longer possess the necessary skills or equipment.

Although this activity requires a high level of knowledge and training, it is downgraded by the larger society. Blishen's socio-economic index rates 320 occupations in Canada put hunting and trapping at the bottom (Blishen, 1967) and shows the fallacy of imposing categories created by individuals from one cultural background on activities performed by persons of another background. In many cases the hunt has assumed aspects of an almost mythical ritual. During the period of field study from mid-April to mid-June, the beaver hunt was in progress. As late as the middle of May, men were still preparing to "go out in a few days." A discussion with a Hudson Bay fur buyer confirmed that the price of a beaver pelt drops from \$35.00 for a good pelt in February to a maximum of \$15.00 in mid-May, both in relation to the seasonal fur cycle and market saturation. Silver fox, worth up to \$1000.00, fifty years ago, now brings \$10.00 a pelt. Only \$40.00 is paid for a good, tanned moose hide. Reluctance to hunt is increased by the inability of women with children in school to accompany men, since former task complementarity breaks down. Men explain that when it is necessary to do the skinning, dressing and tanning themselves, the prices offered are not adequate compensation.

Feelings of frustration among men who still hunt and trap are aggravated by the rejection which the younger women display toward them. The latter are becoming disenchanted and increasingly practical about the possibility of living by hunting alone. One young woman of 20 who had left school and returned to the village commented:

"There isn't a single man in this village I could get interested in. All they do is talk about hunting and every year fewer go. Any man in this village could get a job if he really wanted to. I'm going to get away from here as soon as I can and enjoy life."

Similarly a southern B. C. woman married to a non-Indian and living in the Yukon remarked:

"These men are emasculated. It was the same on our reserve at home. I would never have married an Indian man and I wouldn't want my daughter to".

The realization that many Indian women are unsympathetic creates a further barrier between the man and his environment, and mutual rejection patterns are built up. Men, especially those over 35 are equally critical of the women who are no longer willing to become a "traditional" wife. In most villages there are noticeably more unattached Indian men than there are single marriageable girls over the age of 18. Most girls, like the one just mentioned, have either left the village, or plan to leave at least for a while: it is easier for a girl to move elsewhere, get a job and meet a variety of men¹ than for an unskilled man to get employment and meet other women.

(Because of the mobility of the young people it was impossible to obtain accurate statistics, but at a dance in one village, for a group of 9 men, only one Indian girl married to one of men and myself were recognised as possible dance partners. Although most people at the dance were non-Indian there was no visible interaction between the Indians and whites at any time during the evening and no Indian men asked other white women to dance.)

The Indian men have their problems in the changing Yukon and their relationship with women, both Indian and non-Indian, is one that touches the very foundations of their being. Rejected by the whites, despised by many Indian women, they have little chance to act as men in their traditional cultural terms.

For the Indian woman, the new world that arrives with modern developments in the Territory, offers promises and perils.

¹ For some indication of unmarried men in Yukon Indian bands see Appendix 1.

Restructuring the Family Unit:

The women seem less willing to compromise than do many men. Linked with women's increasing independence in the Yukon is the changing composition of many households and emerging 'matrifocal' family consisting of a widowed, separated or unmarried woman and her children. The women are looking for alternatives to their situation and if the men cannot perform economically women are in a position to evict them temporarily or permanently. In a sense the women live closer to daily problems than do men since they are directly responsible for feeding and clothing the children. In addition to Family Allowance cheques addressed to women, the Federal Government provides necessary financial assistance to family heads of Indian status, and in a case where there is no formal marriage, a woman and her children are eligible for financial assistance. The old system by which women exchanged a certain amount of independence in return for certain privileges is breaking down as the government assumes the role of alternate economic provider. Paradoxically, although IAB has decreed patrilineal descent, it has reinforced a matrilineal system which was dying out and lineages are again often being traced through the mother's line. Even when a permanent husband is attached to the household, the Whitehorse IAB office finds it necessary to issue over fifty percent of the outgoing cheques directly to women, because the husband, who is often absent in the bush or in distant employment, is unable to pick up the cheques. There is also the belief expressed by one official that a cheque given to a woman is more likely to go directly home. Thus a woman is accorded

a measure of freedom not available to her traditionally. This situation was analysed by Asen Balikci in a community study of the Leucheux tribe of Vunta Kutchin living in Old Crow, 80 miles above the Arctic Circle. (Balikci, 1963:(a)) Here social change was tempered by gradual contact with individual missionaries and traders. Traditionally, recognition of matrilineality was superficial. Missionaries, concerned with sex mores, were generally successful in reducing polygyny and wife exchange, and in encouraging the conjugal family as a stable unit: until twenty five years before Balikci's fieldwork no marriage separations were recorded. While there, he found twenty houses in which lived nuclear families with both husband and wife present, eleven households consisting of separated women and their children, six houses occupied by single men, and three by elderly females living alone. There appeared to be little pressure for females to remarry as there had been in the past. Since there were more marriageable males than females, and polygyny had ceased to exist, he related this both to extended absence of males on the trapline or in wage employment and the attendant economic benefits available to women. In addition to being recipients of family allowance and welfare benefits, women could run their own trapline, get assistance from adult sons, and exchange sexual favours for gifts because of the relative absence of agreed upon norms surrounding sex behavior.

It is significant that some separated women reject the idea of "welfare" and have made efforts to get employment. An administrator in the Whitehorse IAB office states that only twelve to eighteen

percent of the families on permanent welfare consist of single women with children and that women more frequently request assistance in finding employment than do men. A few women have managed to obtain further educational training and thus get employment providing a more reasonable standard of living for themselves and their children.

In a capital intensive area like the Yukon, it is difficult for a man to get a job if he is unskilled and is tagged as 'unreliable' - a fate few northern, Indian men escape. But there are a number of unskilled, badly paid, or 'dirty' jobs (waitress, chambermaids, laundry workers, etc.) that can be filled by women. Unfortunately a stereotype encompassing variables ranging from unpredictability to promiscuity may precede these women in their efforts. One woman with an excellent work record applied for a job in Whitehorse. She states that when the man interviewing her discovered she was separated from her husband he enquired bluntly as to whether there was "a man around the house" to supplement her income, a question which would never have been posed to a white woman. In three instances, role reversal was noted where a woman held a job in a local cafe or was out doing housecleaning while her husband stayed home preparing either to hunt or to look for work.

Beyond economic factors, family background plays a part in marriage breakdown. One woman, separated from her husband, attributed the situation in part to her childhood in a residential school where any family model was eliminated.

"At the school, boys and girls were separated all the time. We couldn't even spend time with our brothers. It got so that many of us were so self conscious that we would call a boy 'Mary's brother' rather than his own name. To move from this

to marriage made it hard to have any family life."

A further factor stabilizing matrifocal family structure is compulsory enfranchisement (Section 108: Indian Act). Each year over 400 Indian women in Canada (4431 between 1957 and 1967-according to IAB) marry non-Indians and are deleted from the Indian register, losing Indian status for themselves and for any children they had under 21 years of age as well as for all future children by that marriage. In southern Canada they forfeit any property rights they may have on the reserve. In exchange they receive a per capita share of their band funds and the contract is essentially completed. By the same procedure, a non-Indian woman who marries an Indian becomes a registered Indian entitled to the rights of Indian status. The absence of band funds and the matrilineal bias makes this doubly incongruous in the Yukon. This has led to a large number of common law relationships in the Territory. In the south it is further complicated by unions of women from bands with large funds to men from bands with lesser funds: if she remains legally single, a woman ensures her children the security of her band membership. An additional complicating factor arises in that an individual over twenty-one years who can prove her ability to retain employment, can apply for "enfranchisement" and receive her share of the band funds, then remarry into the band and be eligible again. These factors discussed in both the 1959 and 1960 Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs, and will again come under surveillance in current attempts to revise the Indian Act, but to date no action has been taken. The entire process directly contravenes the United Nations Draft Declaration of the

Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Article 5 states:

"Women shall have the same rights as men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. Marriage to an alien shall not automatically affect the nationality of the wife either by rendering her stateless or by forcing on her the nationality of her husband." (U. N. Commission of the Status of Women 19th Session, Geneva, March 1966)

A number of northern women have gained considerable mobility and a chance to travel "outside" through temporary liaisons with white men. Not being legally bound, they can return to relative financial security for themselves and their children in the Yukon. Three women with whom I spoke gained considerable knowledge about Canada in this way: one had lived for several months in Toronto, another had a photograph collection documenting a trip across Canada and a third had been to Vancouver several times. Since they had all just recently returned, it was not possible to assess how easy they found it to readapt to living in the village.

Wife beating, which sometimes disrupts unions, manifests the frustration men feel when they experience rejection first from the white society and then from their women. A woman living in one village whose husband died several years ago explained that having once had a "good man", she would never marry again, because "all men beat their wives." She spends the winter in her village and in the summer takes her children into the bush to trap. In addition, her separated daughter and this daughter's child live with her. Despite the alleged frequency with which wifebeating occurs, there are few attempts by women to press charges. Social workers and nurses state that they have encouraged women to protest to police after such incidents, but with little success. It would seem that there is hesitation to use "Whiteman's Law" to

sanction a husband; this in turn could bring disapproval from one's own people. It is more likely that the woman will leave home or eject the man, often only temporarily. The futility of laying charges was demonstrated when one woman did attempt to do this during the period of field study, after being beaten by her legal husband, a Whiteman. Several calls she placed to the police to determine when the court hearing would be held proved useless. The man was given a ten dollar fine and a one year suspended sentence and she had no alternative but to return to him. Not being of Indian status, she and her children were not eligible for independent support as she left him.

Maternal and Child Care:

Infant mortality rates have been disproportionately high for the Indian population in the past, and the importance of establishing systematic pre-natal and post-natal care facilities and convincing mothers of their usefulness has gained the attention of medical authorities. A maternal and child health survey, carried out by the Medical Services Division of the Department of National Health and Welfare in 1962 and 1963 (Graham-Cumming, 1967) indicated that infant mortality rates (defined as death of a child during the first year) could be linked with the availability and use of medical services and the quality of home care. In seventy five percent of all live Registered Indian births in 1962 it was possible to assess the quality of home care: for rest, because of remoteness or migration, mother and child were not kept under observation, adequate medical attention was not received, and the infant mortality rate was 147 per 1000 live births. Of the 5,552 Indian infants born that year, forty two percent were assessed as receiving satisfactory home and medical attention, and in this group the mortality rate was 32 per 1000, a rate which compares closely with the 28 per 1000 for Canadians as a whole. Of the remaining fifty eight percent who were evaluated as not receiving sufficient care, the mortality rate was much higher at 116 per 1000. A ten year span shows the overall Indian infant death rate to have dropped from 98 per 1000 in 1956, to 48 per 1000 in 1965.

In the Yukon, with the more recent spread of medical services, the infant mortality rate has decreased radically in the past 2 years.

TABLE NUMBER 1

YUKON INFANT MORTALITY RATES

	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>
Total Live Births	331	339
Total Infant Deaths	23	15
Registered Indian Births	56	103
Registered Indian Infant Deaths	11	7
Non-Indian Births (incl. non-status Indians)	275	296
Non-Indian Infant Deaths	12	8

Infant Mortality Rate:

1966

1967

Indian

178.5/1000

58.2/1000

Non-Indian

40.0/1000

20.2/1000

(Public Health Records: Whitehorse
General Hospital)

In context, this compares with mortality rates of 46.9/1000 for all Canadian Indians and 23.6/1000 for Canada as a whole in 1965, the most recent year for which figures are available.¹

Pregnancy is regarded as a normal state in most cultures and traditionally each culture had its own guidelines for childbirth. Western culture places great priority on the future, and children, being equated with this time are accorded certain rights from the time pregnancy is recognized. In large part this value has been internalized by many Indian mothers who are aware that death of children is not normal. Pressures are now developing in the opposite direction. Some mothers in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia

¹ Data from Department of National Health and Welfare.

have demonstrated to medical authorities that they want better medical services and more information about the existing ones. Because of children, women are essentially more time-oriented than men who were traditionally involved in exploitation of the environment for food, and therefore with extensions in space. Of some fifteen women in the Yukon with whom I discussed whether, given the opportunity again they would rather be a man or a woman, all agreed that they would choose to be a woman and linked this with the bond with their children.

The so-called child neglect to which much infant sickness is attributed is often less a case of wilful neglect than a result of physical circumstances or lack of information. People who love children in the 'Indian way', in a related, permissive manner, often exhibit a casual attitude to their physical well-being. When a family with several children lives in a small poorly ventilated house it is impossible to keep a baby isolated from other people. A constant stream of human traffic through the house lessens the mother's chances to watch the child closely and if he becomes ill she may not notice immediately. Cases of outright neglect do occur, usually linked with alcohol, but this in turn can be traced to reasons other than lack of concern for children. Since these are the highly visible cases, where nurses and social workers have to be called in, there is often a tendency to generalize about them.

Because Indian women often have a large number of children, this becomes important in accounting for the distribution of their energy. The effective fertility ratio of a given population is computed as the number of children under the age of five years divided by the

number of women in the childbearing age between 15 and 49, and is expressed per 1000 of population for standard comparison. (Hughes, 1960:53) Although statistical samples are so small that projections would seem to be of limited value, the consistency of the ratios is significant in spatially separated bands. For the Ross River band the effective fertility ratio for 1966 is computed at 750 per 1000 women of child bearing age (21 children, 28 women) for the Carmacks band at 622 (29 children, 48 women) for the Carcross band at 736 (14 children, 19 women) and for the Whitehorse band at 648 (46 children and 71 women). For comparative purposes it was possible to compute the ratio for countries in which recent census data was available in the 1966 Demographic yearbook. The fertility ratios in the United Kingdom (381) Canada (472) and the United States (436) for the same year and in France (382) and Switzerland (334) for the year 1965, contrast with 1966 ratios of Venezuela (847) Haiti (591) the Honduras (961) Mexico (837) and Fiji (751).

It becomes evident that the fertility of northern Indian women closely approximates that of women in the so-called 'underdeveloped' countries. This also suggests that Indian women in this area expend a good deal more energy in the physical process of childbearing and childraising than do many Canadian women and that they are left with less energy to distribute in other activities. Consequently, any definition of their role is highly dependent on relationships with their children.

Meere's theory of demographic transition (Meere, 1963:chapter 2) indicates that rates of infant mortality decline prior to rates of

fertility and prior to changes in the economic structure. Interest in birth control was expressed by some women over 30 who felt that they had "too many children" but always with the comment that their husbands would be angry if they found out. Birth control is a further threat to the male Indian's manhood. Little value is seen in the idea of pre-planning a family from the early stages. As with minority groups anywhere, efforts of the dominant society to implement birth control as a "solution" are logically interpreted by many Indian people as a plot to reduce their numbers. In some cases it would appear that this is not far from the truth. A Vancouver gynecologist who examined twenty six case histories of Indian maternal deaths recently recommended sterilization of all Indian women with five children after their 35th birthday. Newspapers reported:

"Dr. _____ says every effort must be made to control the fertility of Indian women. Their birth ratio was 34.6 in 1000 compared to 17.3 for non-Indians in the province (B. C.) in 1966."

(Ottawa Citizen, July 31, 1968)

This is the sort of approach that creates great problems to communication between medical authorities and the Indian women with whom they have to work. It confirms the Indian's concept of the Whiteman as someone who is always talking about what is good for Indians without their knowledge or consent.

Pre-natal clinics in the north still do not reach the economic stratum which would benefit from them most. Techniques used effectively with one group are less useful with others. Group counselling which generally remains at a conceptual level lacks relevance for Indian women whose circumstances vary considerably. In addition, educational materials are scarce, and a budget of only \$50.00 per year is allotted

to the Territory for this purpose. (Personal communication: Administrator of Public Health; Whitehorse) Hospital services are centred in Whitehorse, Dawson and Mayo but regular clinics are conducted in the villages. The public health nurse often has a unique entre into the village because she is equipped with certain recognizable skills. Public health must be treated as an integral part of the social process and the nurse's effectiveness depends largely on the extent to which she can adapt to social customs. In one Yukon village, it is reported that the local medicine man is a fixture at all clinics and he and the nurse mutually reinforce one another's roles: he reduces any anxiety women feel about her, and she strengthens his position in the community. Clinics are reputedly becoming a firmly established institution in the villages. One which I attended in Ross River seemed to provide a measure of sociability for the women who brought, rather than sent, their children and stayed to talk with one another after their children had been examined.

On the other hand, hospital treatment is often less neutral. This means leaving the security of the family for an undefined period of time in exchange for an impersonal atmosphere where women are essentially cut off from familiar faces. Nurses report that some women attempt to conceal pregnancy in the hope of staying and having their baby delivered by a local midwife. One young woman in a village I visited who had been to the hospital for treatment previously told me that she planned to leave the village on days when the nurse was visiting during the few weeks prior to the expected birth of her child. Distant villages are connected to Whitehorse by plane service, and

although flights are scheduled for certain days, actual departure is highly dependent on weather conditions. This means that a woman from one of these villages may be brought to the city a week or two in advance of childbirth in order to ensure proximity to the hospital. Prolonged absence from home, and the resulting loneliness appears to create considerable stress for many women in the final stages of pregnancy.

The Community Health Worker programme (initiated by National Health and Welfare) is unique in its employment of native persons to serve in a liaison capacity between medical staff and the Indian people. Trainees are brought together from different parts of Canada and taught in group sessions to identify health and sanitation problems, to assist at clinics and to act as catalytic agents by transmitting the aims of the Department to the people in the community. In addition they are expected to provide information from the community to the Department. Theoretically they are equipped with technical knowledge which they combine with their own social ability to operate at the local level using the native language. In practice, they may find themselves in the precarious position of having their expectations raised by the Department about their ability to implement lasting changes, only to be met by conservative resistance and guarded suspicion among the local people. Currently there are forty three men and thirty five women working in this capacity in Canada: in the Yukon there are two women, one in Teslin, one in the Whitehorse-Carmacks area and a man at Old Crow. One doctor involved in this programme at the Ottawa level suggested that in a number of northern communities women are sometimes able to work more effectively than

men. The former may visit informally and act as mere neutral animators, while men may have to prove their virility by hunting with the men, thereby reducing their time in the village. In general, success seems to depend less on sex than on individual personality and the local situation. There is, however, a striking discrepancy in wages for men and women: women receive between \$30 to \$50 a month less than men do, the total salary depending on the prevailing wage scale in the area. (Dept. of National Health and Welfare) In the Yukon, the starting salary is \$320 per month for men and \$275 for women.

It is not possible to generalize about patterns of childrearing even within one family except to note that the proposition frequently made by non-Indians that Indian mothers do not care for their children is totally at variance with the overall data. Outwardly the strength of the bond between mother and child seems greatly to outweigh that between the spouses. Most women staying at the hostel in town as hospital outpatients for more than a few days express concern about their children who are left in the village, usually with the woman's sister or mother. Most pre-school children coming for medical treatment are accompanied by a mother. Although discipline is largely permissive, young children are kept in sight most of the time and occupy the focus of most conversation among the women. Indian mothers tend to enjoy rather than rigidly discipline their children and accord them considerable latitude in behavior. Small children of pre-school age are handled a good deal and both mother and child appear to derive satisfaction from this. On one occasion a mother at the hostel criticized the fact that in the hospital "white nurses let babies cry"

unheeded. Frequently mothers interrupted other activities to go to a crying child.

Many Indian mothers create a milieu which gives the child independence training at an early age. A number of women when recalling their own childhood referred to tasks which they performed independently at the age of 6 or 7. It was not unusual for children to be entrusted with considerable responsibility in food gathering and allowed to go off on their own or with a younger sibling. Based on past experience, many women, especially those over the age of 35, make the logical assumption that children of this age are capable of remaining alone until late at night or of going off on their own and children respond accordingly. The behavior which is criticized by non-Indians is not the result of attitudes of Indian mothers, but of habitual reactions reinforced by their attitudes. Indian children are often more independent in their actions than are their non-Indian peers and less accustomed to the structured control they meet in a school situation, where a teacher is judged by her ability to conduct an orderly classroom.

Education:

A major threat to the woman's role came with the building of residential schools in the early 1900's. Prior to World War II, public schooling was denied to Indian children and the churches won by default the task of educating the Indians in the ways of the newcomers, a mission which they undertook zealously. Many Indian women throughout Canada retain deeply engrained memories of life in these institutions where they were taught to reject all that was Indian, and a number of northern women related the concern which their mothers and grandmothers expressed when they returned after their first year of school. A woman now living in Whitehorse recalled:

"I'll never forget my grandmother's face when she spoke to me and I didn't understand her and then wouldn't eat gopher. I wasn't allowed to go back to school for another two years."

Most Yukon Indian women now over the age of thirty were removed from school after a few years and given an education by their parents to fit them for the kind of life the family was then living. Two residential schools serve the Yukon, one at Lower Post, B. C. and the other, scheduled to close soon, at Carcross.

These have gradually been replaced by elementary day schools in the major villages serving both Indian and non-Indian students while high school education is given in Whitehorse and accommodation provided at two residences. Although local schools have reinforced the physical bond between mother and child, they have done little to decrease the psychological gap. Most mothers in the villages express ambivalence toward the idea of education. On one hand, they are aware

of the demand for "Whiteman's education" as a prerequisite to getting a job, but in practical terms, they see few visible benefits in a system which makes the children difficult to manage and uninterested in learning the "Indian way". The role of teacher has been effectively taken from them and there is seldom any personal contact between Indian parents and white teachers even when the school is in the village. Mothers express suspicion that their children are not being educated in the true sense of the word and many recall the days "when our parents educated us for life." Integrated schools are geared to non-Indian values, yet give the Indian child only a rudimentary introduction to them. The non-Indian administrators arbitrarily determine what kind of education is best for the Indian child without consulting with or providing information to Indian parents. In terms of goals, both mothers and educators agree that the future of their children is important: because of lack of contact between the two, neither knows what the other is doing about it. Intelligence, interests and capabilities develop more or less as the social environment permits, and insofar as education is considered the total experience of a child, both the classroom and outside it, the process breaks down because of lack of continuity. In addition, the school curriculum in the Yukon is derived directly from that of British Columbia and (as of June, 1968) there has been no integration of ideas with the Northwest Territories¹ or Alaska; however, this is being considered for the future.

Several non-Indian teachers both at elementary and secondary school levels acknowledged that they had come to schools with very

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An international northern education conference is tentatively planned for Montreal in 1969, to be held under the auspices of the Arctic Institute of North America.

little general knowledge about Canadian Indians and none at all about Yukon Indians. In many cases, their expectations are so radically lowered in a classroom situation that they assume that Indian children are incapable of learning beyond a certain point and focus their attention on the non-Indian students. The children, caught between one set of values at home and another at school are seldom able to resolve the inconsistency and reject either their parents or the school and often both. Typical of the comments expressed by different mothers were:

"These kids start to think they're white but they're not and they never will be. They're not Indian either anymore. They don't fit anywhere." (woman living in Whitehorse: went to a residential school)

"It might be different if they could get jobs but most of them won't stay in school that long." (woman living in village: some formal schooling)

"Kids nowadays don't know what fun is. We used to have so much fun learning things in the bush. We worked hard I guess but we enjoyed it. But you can't explain that to these girls. I've thought about it a lot and if I had to do it all over again I'd do the same." (village: no formal schooling)

"The worst thing is when they come back from the hostels. Don't know what they do to them there. But they come home here and lie around all day. Can't even get them to do dishes." (village: some time at residential school)

Mothers have less to teach their children today and it would seem that lack of common experience hampers communication between mother and daughter. One girl in town, doing well at high school, noted this. Her parents separated after the last child left for school and she attributes this to the fact that they had no reason to stay together after the children started to learn things the parents couldn't understand. She never sees her mother now and says

that they would have nothing to talk about if they did get together.

The two residences where students completing upper elementary grades and attending one of the two high schools in Whitehorse may live provide an artificial environment which depends largely on the individual capabilities and interests of administrators and supervisors. One is administered by the Roman Catholic church, the other by the Indian Affairs Branch. Although there are recognised differences in the management of the residences, these do not come within the scope of this paper. Any institution requires a certain number of regulations to function, and without parents to act as buffers, authority falls as usual to Whites. At the time when the hostels were built in 1960, the 'factory' system was considered more efficient in administrative terms than the decentralized 'cottage' system. That it has proved less efficient in human terms is recognised by a few of the staff members in each hostel, by a large number of girls who have left or been asked to leave, and by some who are still there. In most cases, hostels contribute to the student's problem of identity and narrow, rather than broaden, the margin of choice. It is not possible for the few supervisors to give each girl the individual attention she needs, and many girls recognize that the only way to differentiate themselves from the others and thereby receive attention is to "get into trouble" of some kind. A probation officer confirmed that this attitude motivated many of the girls she was working with, and that essentially it was a realistic approach. Most girls who come and stay at the hostel do so with certain expectations that this will prepare them for a kind of life different from that in the village.

Yet the only "home" environments they knew are their own in the village and possibly those of a residential school or hostel. They never experience the home life of Whitemen to which they are supposed to be aspiring. In one hostel there is a "No Visitors Upstairs" sign which virtually excludes the possibility of girls having White friends visit. A high school principal stated that he attempted to introduce a work programme in the residential Riverdale (Whitehorse) area to give a practical aspect to home economics training by placing it in the context of a house, but that the idea was rejected by the Department of Education.

Tensions and Communication:

Tensions

As centres of administration and communication become established in Whitehorse, the urban influence permeates the village and has a magnetic effect on the residents. The set of forces which guides urbanization in the north gains its impetus from southern models, upon which there is dependence for certain goods and ideas and a derivative southern social environment is artificially imposed in a northern physical environment. As the surrounding settlements become intimately linked with the Whitehorse hub for goods, services and information, the dichotomy between rural and urban milieus breaks down. Buses, cars or planes connect the villages with the city; radios are visible in many of the homes; government agencies, hospital services and hostels are centred in Whitehorse. With no exception of Pelly Crossing and Old Crow all major villages are composed of both Indians and Whites who, though they live in segregated spheres physically, socially and emotionally cannot but influence one another. The worldwide process of urbanization of the village and peasantization of the city which Halpern discusses in China, India, Yugoslavia, Mexico, Russia and the United States (Halpern, 1967) is not bypassing Canada or its north. Although the village remains the primary point of reference for many women who dislike the city, it does not negate the effect it has on them, their families and their settlement.

This section will examine certain major tensions which women experience in urban village life and will then look at the communication facilities which become available in the process. The relationship of

these topics becomes apparent in that the extent to which women anywhere can resolve feelings of stress often depends largely on the possibilities they have of communicating these feelings to a receptive listener.

Tensions of Uncertainty: As changes multiply, the ability to predict behavior to the extent necessary for the smooth functioning of a social system becomes less certain. Society is never frictionless; but stresses arise in greater or lesser degree depending on the external forces impinging on individuals.

Indian women's roles seem formerly to have derived from clearly recognizable relationships with others: roles of child and daughter, young woman, wife, mother and older woman all depended on expectations of other family members as well as on pre-existing tradition. Potential conflict was inevitable when, for example, a woman had rights and obligations of a wife requiring a certain submissiveness as well as of a mother or disciplinarian. As a socialized being she understood the limitations which defined her sphere of behavior and was capable of switching from one role to another. Now the same conflict becomes more serious as husband and children spend less time in the home. The woman is merely aware that different, and often conflicting expectations of her rights and obligations may be held by her husband, her children, other Indian men or women, the Indian superintendent, the public health nurse, the social worker, the teacher, the R. C. M. P. officer, the white women and men with whom she comes into contact. Structurally the family circle may seem to be narrowing, but in reality it is widening as a host of new agents place independent demands on the

members. As the conjugal family is deprived of some of its functional importance, it tends to lose its structure as a readily definable unit.

A woman experiences diffuse pressures to assume greater responsibility and is expected to differentiate between courses of action, often without adequate information as to what the choices are or what they involve. Alteration of roles to be effective requires an understanding of the rights and obligations of the role to which one is moving and a corresponding change in behavior. It equally requires that the individuals with whom one is in contact alter their behavior accordingly. Comparison is the tool of discovery in any situation. For northern women who lack the broad comparative base which many women in the south have been able to develop, no model and no consensus exists. Without this information a woman is left to independent and spontaneous reinterpretation of her own role. This in turn creates stresses, and identification of these indicates possible areas where further change may occur.

Adaptation of Older Women: Considerable conservatism is found in attitudes of women over 40 who are living in the village. Having experienced in their lifetime the transition from a nomadic life where they saw themselves as part of an animistic, personal environment, to a sedentary existence and a secular environment, they express considerable uncertainty as to just what life style is desirable and many indicate a preference to return to bush life. Although the decline in hunting and trapping can essentially be traced to economic factors, it is the social aspects involved in the traditional life of which the

women seem to feel deprived. Their social environment extends beyond distinctively human relationships to encompass the total surroundings and life is guided largely by the rhythm of the seasons. The research period from mid-April to mid-June coincided with an especially difficult time of year because spring is the period associated with considerable mobility in trapping and fishing. Some of these women are physically incapacitated because of age, others are bound to the village by schools. Days are routinized and the recognition that bush life is in no sense possible, except perhaps for two months in the summer when the children are out of school, and that younger girls and women reject the kind of life that they found meaningful no doubt decreases their own desire to pursue it. In Old Crow, the muskrat season is accommodated by having school holidays in May and June, but in villages with Indians and non-Indians, this is not considered practicable.

Their conservatism becomes evident in the way they structure time and space. They frequently organize time around specific points of reference in the past with "before" indicating the time of the idealized "good life": "before the highway", "before the liquor", and "before the welfare" when the Indians were not dependent on the Whiteman's government to meet basic material needs. They define themselves as "the Indians" and frequently reject the younger generation blaming the infiltration of "White blood" for the changes which have taken place, stating that "there are no more Indians," or "the young people don't know the Indian way," or "kids now are no good". The inevitable generation gap has taken on the proportions of a culture

gap which is reinforced in many cases by mutual patterns of rejection.

The majority of these women have spent their entire lives in the Yukon and have little knowledge of the world beyond it. The outside world converges on them but they are aware that they have little influence on it. The term "outside" to refer to everywhere that is not the Yukon has been adapted from non-Indians in many cases but it is used in a different way. To most non-Indians, the "outside" is the world which they have temporarily left and to which they will return. To the Indian women, the Yukon is home, "the Indian country", and "outside Indian" is not considered a real Indian. There is little recognition of a national Indian identity and the main interest elicited by a map of Indian reserves in Canada was in the location of Edmonton, where the major hospital serving the North is located, and of Vancouver, a place where many young people consider going. Whitehorse is the standard by which they judge a city and their concept of manageable space is usually limited to their village and the area they covered with their families when young. They are forced into a situation of peripheral adaptation to a rapidly urbanizing society which has no precedent for them and to which they cannot relate in a meaningful way.

There is a tendency for many non-Indians to eulogize wistfully about the virtues of the "old people", whom it would seem are valued more as simple but astute curiosities than for their existence as human beings who might be capable of making contributions. The criticism expressed by some non-Indians that young people are no longer interested in learning about their tradition from the elder people is well founded in many cases but it must also be remembered that traditional ways are consistently downgraded by non-Indian administrators

in the cautious search for "rational" approaches to change. On the other hand, one young woman who had returned to the Yukon after spending several months studying with other Indian students in Vancouver said that she hoped to spend her summer in her village learning some of the legends from her parents and her grandparents. The elder people are the bearers of tradition and it is often the women who have the opportunity to keep the oral history alive by recounting it over beadwork. Several men were critical of non-Indians who want to record legends and take away from the territory, ostensibly for personal benefit, but a number of women stated that these legends ought to be recorded if they could be integrated into the school curriculum and taught to the children. Such a reinjection of the history and folklore would benefit not only Indian children but also non-Indian children and teachers. Far from being outmoded, the values of the Indian culture may become increasingly important in the future with the need for co-operation toward common goals. The problem is one of locating socially acceptable tension outlets which will allow the women to use their creative abilities and which will benefit both Indians and non-Indians.

Social Control of Younger Women: For many women, tension is generated by awareness of their powerlessness as disciplinarians in controlling the behavior of their daughters. This was formerly a family matter necessary for the survival of the hunting group, and mothers frequently mentioned the authority their own mothers exercised when they were young. As Day (1968) noted in analysis of Eskimo acculturation, sex was traditionally regarded as a rather friendly matter among northern

Indians and Eskimes without the grim meral overtones apparent in the English language and culture; however it took place in a personal environment and was a means of cementing kinship. As people from different backgrounds converge, mechanisms for social control break down.

Dependence on resources outside the community has presented new elements which capture the imagination of the younger women. Cowboy ballads are heard on the radio, from juke boxes and on record players which some families now own. Movie magazines and "True Romance" stories are visible in homes and are read by many of the young women. They provide the concepts of city life and excitement especially for these girls who are unable to find anything meaningful in the school system and have rejected that as an alternative. The influx of transient men from "outside" presents a new possibility. Girls are aware of social and economic benefits which derive from association with White-men, and some girls apparently view these men as an attractive substitute for the idea of staying in the village and following certain traditional tasks as their mothers still do.

Unfortunately the process of mutual sexual exploitation which occurs seldom results in the romantic life style which they may initially envisage. Once Whitemen become involved, sex takes on moral and medical implications. The ratio of men to single women in mining camp areas gives the girls ample opportunity to meet the men socially. For a number of mines, the village is the closest place of interest where one can find liquor, women and a "good time." It is regrettable that the cultures collided when the understanding of sex mores was so different. As Mannoni states in discussing colonization policy in

Africa:

"Civilization is necessarily an abstraction. Contact is made not between abstractions but between real live human beings, and the closest contact often occurs at the least desirable levels." (Mannoni, 1964:23)

Indications are, from discussions with some of the younger women that in areas where there has previously been little contact with Whitemen, the overtures of these men are initially interpreted as typical of the value system of the south. On the other hand, most men involved view Indian girls simply as a readily available sexual resource. The set of incongruent stereotypes does little to facilitate understanding between the two cultures and the impression that Indian women are "promiscuous" is carried back to non-Indians. The stereotype of Whitemen which some mothers expressed is equally pervasive. The attempts of transient men to take advantage of permissive attitudes toward sex in relationships with their daughters seldom receives their wholehearted support. Traditionally sex stabilized relationships: now it becomes disruptive. One mother noted:

"They call the Indians a bunch of drunks, but you notice when Whitemen want to make a good party they head straight for the Indian village. The girls are looking for something..fun, excitement...and they think they get it this way. I'd like to send them all back where they come from."

This is often the most visible result of "northern development" for Indian women.

A steady relationship, or a series of fairly stable relationships, are acceptable and expected and a number of these do seem to have a degree of permanence totally independent of a formal "marriage". However, a woman who carries on a series of simultaneous relationships often experiences censure from other women in her community

partly because her visibility perpetuates the stereotype which they have come to recognize. There would seem to be an attempt to compensate for ineffectiveness of social control within many families by directing criticism toward other women in the village. This not only temporarily allays their own tensions but creates new ones and enters into some of the younger women's decisions to seek greater invisibility in Whitehorse. A 17 year old girl remarked typically, "If you even walk around with a fellow here the whole village starts talking. At least in Whitehorse you can go out without everyone knowing who you were with and guessing at where you went."

"Whitewoman" is a somewhat more neutral term in the north because the majority of informal interaction has been with White-men, but this in no way suggests that it is held in very high esteem. Each language has a word for "woman" and a separate word for "Whitewoman", the latter being a derogatory category when used in a general sense. A series of "Whitewoman" jokes serves to discharge hostility and release tension. The term effectively conveys information and can be used as a mechanism of social control. Two examples serve to illustrate this, the first related by a non-Indian woman who was present when it occurred: An Indian woman who had been in Whitehorse for medical treatment was told that she would be allowed to return to the village on a certain day. On the specified day, the doctor requested that she remain a few more days. The woman became very upset and began to cry, while a non-Indian woman tried to console her with no positive results. Suddenly an Indian woman who had been watching exclaimed, "You stop that. You're acting like a

Whitewoman!" Immediately the tears ceased and the woman resumed her former activity. In one village a mother explained how this was used to control her daughter who had returned from the hostel and refused to eat the food prepared for her. "We call her 'White-woman' in our language and laugh at her. 'Give her cake' we say. She sure change her mind in a hurry."

Attitudes Toward Drinking: Closely linked with the problems of sedentary life and tension management is drinking behavior. This complex subject has been dealt with extensively by other researchers and will be considered only as an adjunct here. (See Henigmann, Dailey, and Clairmont)

Alcohol consumption was consistently mentioned by the women and treated as a problem, rather than as a symptom of other problems, although it was generally linked in conversation with difficulties such as wifebeating and child neglect. The significant factor is that when the subject came up it was introduced by the women themselves. The majority were highly critical of drinking, especially when they spoke of occasions when they themselves "drank too much." Even though this might have little effect on their overall behavior, indications are that drinking occurs in "binges" depending on the availability of money and the overall level of tension rather than in regular periods of sustained consumption. Undoubtedly the fact that I was white influenced their handling of the topic. Some seem to have internalized the stereotype that Indians drink more than non-Indians and others, to think that any non-Indian person holds this view and that they must explain. In view of the high rate of liquor

consumption among the non-Indian segment of the population in the north, for which no accurate statistics are available, this is largely an artificial distinction. Several native girls who were students in town asked me if I knew why Indians drank so much. One woman introduced the topic of her sister with the statement "she doesn't drink", admitting the existence of the stereotype by denying it in a specific instance. Another woman, discussing her drinking explained:

"I've got to stop I know but there's nothing else to do. I stop for a while but I get lonely so I go visit and someone says 'have some of this' and it starts again. My sister doesn't drink and she's always preaching at me to quit but that makes it worse. I just like to talk with people and I get lonely."

Boredom, loneliness, frustration and a desire to have contact with familiar faces may lead to the beer parlour which is sometimes the only visible link between the village and the town.

It would seem to be not so much the fact of drinking as beliefs about the way liquor is handled, based on visible Indians, which creates the stereotype. On the other hand, the phrase "if the White-man gets drunk he's a swinger; if an Indian does he's a drunken Indian" equally applies. One young Whiteman employed in a professional capacity, discussing this, related how he and two colleagues had played football in the main street of a northern town at three A.M. after a party. The football eventually hit the windshield of an R. C. M. P. car, yet elicited only a genial wag of the finger from the officer. A much lesser degree of intoxication usually ends in arrest for an Indian person. Hard and heavy drinking has always been an acceptable part of the "true northerner" stereotype. When Indians drink, they usually end up in jail.

One native woman in her early twenties who doesn't drink explained the problems of trying to find friends who shared other interests. Her boy friend (Indian) has a number of non-Indian friends who extend invitations to spend the evening with them but always at a drinking establishment. The couple has neither the money for, nor the interest in, drinking and consequently they seldom mix socially either with Indians and non-Indians.

The Whitehorse Correctional Institute which has been operating since June 6, 1967 provides one way of gauging recent female offenses¹ though it fails to account for persons fined without incarceration. A breakdown of female inmates for the ten month period between its opening and Mar. 31, 1968 shows the part ethnicity and liquor plays:

INDIAN STATUS:	66	89%
METIS :	5	
WHITE :	3	11%

The longest sentence was for 6 months; this for a white woman. No Indian woman was held for longer than 3 months. The percentage of liquor related offenses was 98%. Crucial here is the fact that forty nine of the sixty six women of Indian status were sentenced under the Indian Act (sect. 94b) with being intoxicated off a reserve when there are no reserves in the Yukon. In the Northwest Territories this has been amended so that Indian status persons, like everyone else, are charged under the Liquor Ordinance Law.

Common to all these problems of tension and handling of tension is the need to be able to communicate effectively with others.

¹
No records were readily available on this.

Communication

While urbanization of the village is generally considered an inevitable transformation, the migration of persons to the city often causes greater consternation because it creates more visible social problems. In fact, the two trends are continuous, and any search for solutions requires an understanding of the possibilities for communication which become available at both ends of the process. Weiner argues that:

"Society can only be understood through a study of the messages and the communication facilities which belong to it. (Weiner, 1950:25)

Restructuring the Channels of Communication: The majority of Indian people commute, rather than permanently migrate to the city. As they do so, certain channels of communication assert themselves. Men often have a greater degree of mobility than do women and drift in and out of town more randomly. Women with child-raising responsibilities usually come to town for specific reasons such as social welfare services or medical treatment. Depending on the reason for their visit and the availability of transportation, they may spend several days in town either with relatives or at the hostel for women, and this gives them considerable free time around the specific appointment.

Most women staying at the hostel expressed considerable uncertainty about the city. In these surroundings, where predictability is least possible, stresses are most likely to arise. Given this lack of certainty, there is need to test one's position by comparing it with others. In an effort to fill in time and gain some stable point of reference they talk with one another, walk downtown and visit other

women who have moved from their village to the Whitehorse area. Although physical mobility initially breaks down kinship ties, it can later reinforce them as more people gain access to transportation. A woman carries messages from the village to town and in return receives news about the city which can be relayed back to the village. For these women who stay at the hostel limited comparison with women from other villages also becomes possible. The loose oral communication system is reinforced by the technically superior media of the city which break down village isolation. Yet the media can also become personalized: many women staying at the hostel consider a radio request show, hosted by an Indian man on Saturday afternoon, a convenient way to transmit a message from the city back to the village during their absence.

In addition to controlling certain information gained through these channels, women receive the majority of messages from non-Indian "change agents". Social workers, nurses, ministers and priests have stated that women are usually the persons with whom they deal most frequently. For this reason the messages women transmit can be seen as vital in the process of social change.

It is important therefore that these messages be accurate and understandable. A major source of strain for Indians are those people who talk down to them, or talk to them "just as if they were whites". Indians are neither inferior to nor the same as Whitemen. They are different.

Communication With non-Indians: Coming to the city also involves learning to communicate with non-Indians and in many cases this

means dealing with specialized functionaries rather than with individuals and doing so in the latter's environment rather than in village. The need to convey messages accurately becomes increasingly difficult when persons are dealing with one another in a limited and formal situation. Persons acting in a specialized position are often more concerned with the technical aspects of the message which they are transmitting and with prescriptive rather than more broadly descriptive information. Cliches and standard answers provide very little information, yet are frequently used in encounters between Indians and non-Indians. Transfer of information is always subject to interpretation and a possible change in meaning, and this increases across cultural barriers. Non-Indians are a highly verbal culture: Indian women who are sensitive to other cues may place greater weight on the non-verbal content. Information refers to the content of what is actually exchanged and circulated in the environment regardless of any intended or interpreted meaning. The way something is said or the presence of an office counter separating Indian and non-Indian may have greater effect than what is actually stated. Yet non-Indians are less likely to recognize similar kinds of information from the women. Discussions with several non-Indians indicate that when they speak of difficulties in communicating with Indian persons they consider this primarily in terms of linguistic barriers, and in terms of conveying, rather than receiving messages. The tendency of Whites to talk down to them was mentioned repeatedly by Indian women. Several women described, and on other occasions I saw how they consciously lapse into the role of the "dumb Indian woman" in order to avoid becoming outwardly hostile in a situation which could otherwise involve conflict. Generally such

information totally eludes non-Indians who are accustomed to reacting only to verbal hostility, and they interpret silence to mean that the woman agrees with them or does not understand. Interpretations of the status of Indian women become important insofar as they predispose the way non-Indians react to them rather than provide tension release. Communication with non-Indians often generates further stresses. An Indian woman from a southern city elaborated this:

"I know that I've got two strikes against me because I'm both an Indian and a woman but I've learned that I can use this and I know many women do. Most non-Indians think that if you're an Indian you lack intelligence and if you're a woman this is doubly true. It's often easiest to work around people by living up to their expectations."

Terms of address convey considerable information. Behannan's (1963: chapter 4) explanation of how behavioral patterns affix themselves to certain kinship terms also holds true beyond the immediate kin group. The Indian culture is a highly personalized one and first names are generally used in addressing one another. Many non-Indians dealing with Indian persons in a formal capacity attempt to achieve rapport by addressing all Indians by their first name regardless of age, sex or how well they know them. An Indian woman from an Ontario city remarked:

"Perhaps I'm oversensitive because I'm an Indian woman but I very much resent being called by my first name by people I hardly knew, yet it happens all the time. My name is Mrs. P____ and if a white woman would be addressed this way, I don't see why I shouldn't be. I have the idea that white people think they're using psychology when they do this but I always suspect that they're trying to put something over on me."

In the north, I seldom heard an Indian woman called "Mrs." by a non-Indian, yet on a number of occasions Indian women and twice an Indian man referred to a close friend of theirs as "Mrs." when mentioning her to me, a white person. One woman, talking of a non-Indian family friend, mentioned with obvious pride that although he had known her

her to me, a white person. One woman, talking of a non-Indian family friend, mentioned with obvious pride that although he had known her for years, he still called her "Mrs. S ____". When I asked her about this, she added "When I want someone to call me by my first name, I ask them to." Certainly there are many cases where a formal marriage has not taken place. But where it has, women appreciate recognition of the fact in dealings with non-Indians who attach considerable significance to the legal distinction. Older women, especially, sometimes stated that this was part of the process of being "talked down to". The hospital attempts to reduce impersonality to a minimum but does have a rule that female patients be addressed as "Mrs." if they are married. Informally, a number of nurses admit that this rule is often waived for mental patients, old people and Indians.

Kinds of Intermediaries: Once patterns of communication become standardized it is difficult to change them. Intermediaries may either support established attitudes or present new ideas.

"A piece of information in order to contribute to the general information of the community must say something substantially different from the community's previous stock of information."
(Weiner, 1950:163)

Old Crow is best known to many people through the intermediary, Edith Jessie, whose reports appear in the Whitehorse Star. The folksy image which she presents had gained such popularity that her columns are published yearly, unedited and in book form, and an international magazine once devoted an article to her. This communication system was set up when the Star decided to hire a correspondent from Old Crow

and the (then) Anglican minister's wife chose Edith because she was unmarried and had no husband to support her. Essentially a creation of the non-Indian, this woman's function as an intermediary has given her considerable power in that her reports, though impressionistic, largely control the idea the "outside" world has of the settlement. Although her portrayal of cheerfulness differs considerably from Balikci's (Balikci, 1963) and the suicide of an Old Crow man during the period of field study would not suggest contentment, the messages she transmits elicit obvious approval from her readers in the south. Her future is secure as long as she continues to control this segment of the newsmedia. A compilation of her articles from 1962-1965 (Jesie, 1966) shows little change in the point of view and content of her information. She is a "safe" intermediary from the point of view of non-Indians because she tells them what they want to hear. Old Crow people are fondly referred to in the south as the "real Indians" but often their image confirms the stereotype that Indians are a happy people in their natural state, and is faintly reminiscent of the nineteenth century "noble savage" approach.

In the absence of readily available channels by which ideas can be transmitted from Indian to non-Indian people, some women are beginning to look for ways to establish these. Two native women took executive positions in federal parties during the June 1968 election campaign in the Yukon, one as secretary of one party, the other as vice-president of another. One girl attending high school in Whitehorse said that she believed that the only way to resolve feelings of tension between Indian and non-Indian students was to have open

discussions in the classroom about why barriers existed. She and a non-Indian girl planned to approach one of their teachers jointly about this possibility. In general, Indian women seem more willing to establish a relationship with a non-Indian person in which they are treated as equals and to which they can freely contribute ideas. Women appear to be more willing to discuss personal problems involving themselves or their children than are men who often confine talk to their hunting and release tension in outward hostility. Any definition of the problem has to come from both Indians and non-Indians if concerted action is to take place. At the present time decisions are constantly being made which affect the Indian people directly without establishing ways to find out what their reactions are. The system has no feedback, and the Indian people in the Yukon and elsewhere resent this. Modernization implies that people have a voice in decisions that affect them.

Housing:

In material terms, housing is a major concern of Indian women. As long as Indian families were mobile, they could construct a camp and move when necessary. Once they were localized in villages, the need for more permanent housing became apparent. Non-Indians frequently use housing as a yardstick by which to gauge both Indians and the Indian Affairs Branch, and the Branch has been pressured to take the responsibility of placing Indians in "more suitable" structures. Since housing is an easily quantifiable criterion, amounts spent can be annually tabulated in Ottawa in a statistical demonstration of 'Branch progress!'. The tendency to treat housing as a panacea for all problems has proved meaningless in many cases. The simple determinism which assumes that giving a person a house improves his overall level of welfare, and that everyone entertains the same ideas about the kind of house he should occupy is unrealistic and fails to account for individual preferences. Housing merely roots many Indians in locations which they prefer to leave. In the Yukon, where no revolving loan fund was established, the idea that a house is just another 'handout' stimulates little pride in ownership and provides no incentive to keep it repaired.

The real issue is not to determine what size, shape or colour houses should be, but to provide the people with some opportunity to participate in the decision making. Although women traditionally built the houses in the Eastern Subarctic, on the Plains and in northwestern Canada, and therefore had a very large say in the housetype, little consideration has been given to this role in the north. A letter

received from a native woman living in the Northwest Territories noted:

"Women have never been consulted about housing projects whatsoever. This is most unfortunate but I suppose this will come eventually."
(Jan. 17th, 1968
Fert Smith, N. W. T.)

One woman living in Ross River mentioned that she had been told she might get a new house. When? She did not know. Where would it be? They had not told her. What would happen to her present house? She hoped that she could use it as a cache but she doubted it. In Pelly Crossing one woman moved herself and her family from a tent to a house which IAB had built. Once there, she stated that her children became sick with colds, so she moved the entire family back into the tent during the winter. The tent, though small, is comfortable and can be easily heated. In Dawson, houses built by IAB were later condemned by the Department of National Health and Welfare because they lacked sanitary facilities. A flash flood two years ago at spring break-up filled the houses with several feet of water and in the absence of repairs, the floors are in some cases separated from the walls by more than eight inches. As in many Yukon houses, walls are lined with cardboard for added insulation, windows are small and interiors are dark.

Women everywhere have preference as to the kinds of home they consider suitable, and individual likes and dislikes have to be taken into consideration if programmes of housing are to achieve a measure of success. Frequent complaints from the women centred on the location of the villages. Women in the Whitehorse village complain that they are living in a swamp; in Ross River the women complain that they

are in a dust pile. It is stated by officials that the Indians chose the sites in the first place; however, when this was done, they were still in the habit of migrating and it is doubtful whether they realized the far-reaching implications of their choice. If villages are in economically productive locations, more than housing is needed to make them enjoyable places in which to live; if not, consideration should be given to relocating those persons who wish to move rather than building more houses for them. The major dilemma - where to build houses for people involved in a changing world in a changing area - is one that is common to the whole world. But experience in northern Canada has shown that poor housing is more expensive than good housing, even if such housing is only temporary or is built on the disposable principle. Any savings on housing are wiped out by increased health costs.

Criticism of Indian women's standards of housekeeping is often made by people who admit that they have never actually visited an Indian home. Many Indian mothers may have little interest in jeopardizing easy going relationships with their children, by emulating White standards of housekeeping which in turn could bring censure from other women in the village. Closely linked with the difficulties of housekeeping is the availability of water and the energy involved in transporting it. In most villages, water must be carried in pails from a river and in the winter this also means chopping a hole in the ice or melting quantities of snow. In the Whitehorse village where a central storage tank has been installed because of distance from the river, the necessity of "packing" water has become a source

ed discontent. The city supplies water to the Takhini settlement beyond the village and a standing argument exists between the Indian Affairs Branch and the city as to whose responsibility it will be to finance water installation for the village if and when this should be deemed feasible. The more practical question could be whether the village is going to remain there, or be removed. Again the situation arises of government functionaries arguing about problems which concern people without their participation. The rationale given by one official was that "the Indians would let the pipes freeze anyway." In a climate with dramatic fluctuations in temperature, one would question the premeditation involved in letting pipes freeze in the winter. It could rather reflect on the quality of insulation in the houses and the need to complement the provision of facilities with suitable education programmes.

Employment Opportunities:

Unmarried girls who have left school often find that there is little to occupy them in the village either in the general sense of work they are capable of doing or in the specific sense of work they can be paid to do. They see the possibility of expanding their boundaries by leaving the village and it becomes evident that in addition to the search for excitement, beliefs about "good jobs" elsewhere often enter into their decision. Any examination of changes in the woman's role must consider the opportunity structure which become available in the wage-based economy, and how closely these match the expectations women held about what participation in this economy can mean.

Migration from the village to the city on a permanent or semi-permanent basis requires the transition from the village where relations are highly personalized to an environment where one falls into the category of "an Indian" regardless of personal capabilities. Girls consistently remarked that one thing they disliked most in Whitehorse was "being stared at." In the city there are few traditional confinements but on the other hand there is little structure or guidance. Efforts to achieve greater opportunity or greater invisibility are frustrated if a woman is not equipped with the skills defined as necessary by the larger non-Indian population. Consequently, although a woman's status may increase in her own terms because of greater personal freedom, this particular style of emancipation may result in her overall social status being ascribed at a lower level than it was in the village by the majority of the population.

Porter (1965) noted that all ethnic groups in Canada with the exception of Native Indian and Eskimo were more than half "urban" by 1961. His rough hierarchy of ethnic groups represented in Canada, lumps Indians and Eskimos together at the bottom, 60.3% being employed in unskilled jobs. An examination of the latest census data (Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961) indicates that of the 6,146 Canada Indian women in the female labour force that year, 3,110 were in the D. B. S. gross category 'service and recreation' and 2,036 of these were in the sub-category 'waitresses, cooks and related workers.' To give a more precise idea of how these particular occupations are generally evaluated in terms of social prestige, it is helpful to use Pineo and Porter's 'Occupational and Prestige Scores' in terms of socio-economic categories as they are rated by a representative sample of Canadians. (Pineo-Porter, 1967:p.35)

TABLE NUMBER 11

OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE SCORES BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC CATEGORIES

Occupational Title	No. of Titles	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Professional	21	72.04	8.16
Proprietors			
Managers & Officials (large)	16	70.42	12.99
Semi-Professional	29	57.73	8.29
Proprietors			
Managers & Officials (small)	23	48.79	8.91
Clerical and related	23	38.57	8.90
Skilled	27	38.73	6.93
Unskilled	18	23.43	6.23
Unemployed	6	34.98	10.01

Specific ratings accorded the previously mentioned occupations are:

Housekeeper	28.8
Cook	29.7
Waitress	19.9

It is hardly accurate to apply the yardstick of one culture to another but where these persons are participating directly in the social milieu of the urban society, such an index does have valid repercussions on their overall level of social mobility. It would appear that a great number of Indian women are being recruited into occupations which will essentially lock them into the "lower class". In the Yukon, in 1961, 62 of the 78 Indian status females classified as being in the labour force were in 'service and recreation' occupations, the others being: 1 professional, 1 business, 1 farmer, or trappers, 2 craftsmen and 3 whose occupations are unspecified. (Canada: The Yukon Today, 1968:8) In terms of available jobs, opportunities for unskilled employment in the north are greater for Indian women than for Indian men because of possibilities of cleaning and restaurant work. Frequently employers hold the expectation that Indian women are poor employment risks and are hesitant to hire them. A woman who does stay at a job becomes absorbed and invisible, while one who finds little satisfaction in her work with all the attendant requirements of clock-punching and leaves, reinforces the stereotype and makes it doubly difficult for the next native girl who applies. A number of the women in the Whitehorse Indian village have job histories of sporadic employment, but unless they can arrange transportation, the alternative to a two mile walk, especially difficult in the winter, is a taxi which substantially

deplotes their salaries. Indications are that if a white girl takes a job and leaves she is considered an unfortunate exception; if an Indian girl does this, she is judged primarily as a representative of an ethnic group. This contradiction is further demonstrated in the mobility of the white population with whom Indians most frequently deal: the government officials, teachers, social workers and nurses quite regularly leave after a year or two and for them such behavior has come to be expected and by virtue of its consistency, acceptable. The majority of non-Indians in the North see jobs in monetary terms and will withstand short-term job discomfort and bureaucratic pressures in return for long-term benefits (these being "outside" where they will return in the foreseeable future.) Having internalised the value of "deferred gratification" many of them have little patience with Indian people who look for immediate answers, and do not distinguish sharply between work and leisure. One of the reasons Indian girls leave the village in the first place is because they are looking for some kind of meaningful activity. As one young girl who had returned after studying in Vancouver explained, "The girls up here have no goals, nothing to really plan for. I used to run around a lot and jump from job to job up here too. When you're not getting anything out of it except a bit of money, you give up."

For a number of women who have families, the only realistic form of employment is home industry. Those who do not sell their craftwork independently may bring it to the Indian Affairs Branch operated Handicraft store in town where it is then resold to the public. When this was originally set up it was intended to become a

self-supporting co-operative similar to a number of those in the south; this has not materialised and the store continues to be government subsidised, government operated and government controlled. Unfortunately no rotating fund was set up at the time and instead money is sent to the Treasury Department in Ottawa which is somewhat irregular in returning funds. Consequently as of June 17, 1968, there had been a period of approximately six weeks during which no money was available to pay the women for their work, and vouchers had to be given instead.

For some young Indian women it is possible to go outside the territory for further training or to a prearranged job. Where guidance is possible and contact maintained this has proved one way of giving them a comparative basis but sponsorship under the Department of Indian Affairs is available for only a limited few who measure up to the standards of the school system and are registered Indians. Indications are (in a very limited sense because of small numbers) that girls who go to the south from the Yukon for vocational training, high school or upgrading are fairly successful. In 1967-68, three girls (no boys) were taking upgrading courses in Victoria, B. C. and one was the school's best student. At high school in Victoria there were 5 girls and one boy. At vocational school in Vancouver there were 8 girls and 5 boys. To date (June, 1968) 6 girls and 1 boy are scheduled to go in September, 1968. (Whitehorse IAB) Unmarried women without children who are trained in Whitehorse as nursing assistants are usually encouraged to go south to work for a while, but the matron of the Whitehorse

The Whitehorse Vocational School was established in 1962 to alleviate the situation of a surplus of unskilled labour created by uneven distribution of employment possibilities throughout the Territory and the resulting "overurbanization". No separation is recorded between Indian and non-Indian students because all come under the sponsorship of the Department of Manpower, but the school principal estimates that approximately 35% of the students initially enrolled in September, 1967 were of Indian status. It is apparent that a number of young people regard this training as the key to "status" employment either in Whitehorse or beyond the Territory. In actual fact, they are equipped with only rudimentary skills and often jobs are not available for them when they graduate. Beyond upgrading, the courses available for women include secretarial skills, hairdressing, cooking and nursing assistant. One native woman who graduated first in her cooking class, found that initially she could get employment as a laundress. She expressed the view that young girls often have aspirations raised without adequate counselling, and think that they will have a job assured upon graduation. They give up when they find that their training is of limited value in the employment market. There are a number of unemployed hairdressers throughout the territory. One young native woman in Dawson was able to set up a successful hairdressing salon but in most villages both the clientele and the financial backing are lacking. The Vancouver Manpower office has indicated to the school principal that native women, specifically, may have difficulty finding employment as hairdressers there and they should be advised not to come to that

of their capabilities. These courses have considerable potential for equipping girls with certain skills but they are downgraded by non-Indians. This in turn leads to lack of interest on the girls' part (interpreted as 'laziness') and the drop-out is high. In the occupational courses offered by the F. H. Collins secondary school in Whitehorse, the total enrollment in all three levels in September, 1967 included 18 native girls and 8 white girls. By June, 1968, 5 native girls and 6 white girls remained. As far as the teacher could ascertain most of the native girls who dropped out had returned at least temporarily to their village.

Such skills could be used in the north in relatively prestigious positions making it possible for some girls to demonstrate these in different communities, perhaps linked with a home economist. Some aspects of the community Health Worker program have been outlined. Training courses held in the provinces give individuals exposure to other people, other situations and other ideas beyond the Territory. One problem is that this opportunity is available to only a few people. With exception of a pilot project currently underway in Manitoba and Saskatchewan in which Indian mothers are being trained as teacher-aids (See Appendix 11) no analogous programs exist in the Department of Indian Affairs. A Branch official in the Personnel Division at the Ottawa level explained that this was because there was no demand from the Indian people for such programmes. This directly contradicts evidence which was encountered, but is consistent with the view that bureaucracies are present rather than future crisis oriented and that few channels exist to inform administrators of what people really

social pleasantaries. It would be equally instructive for Indian women teach craftwork and explain the past and present history from their point of view. Not having been instrumental in the definition of the problem, they are unlikely to become involved in a situation where a group of non-Indian women who have previously demonstrated little interest in cultivating their acquaintance gather them together to tell them what they, the outsiders, have diagnosed as the "Indians' problem".

McNickle's (1967) analysis of problem solving comes closer to the central issue:

"to solve problems you have to be part of the process out of which the solutions grew. This cannot be done from outside no matter what resources are available in terms of money or people. It can only happen when the people in the community see the problem and make a decision."

In these terms a more realistic approach has recently been taken in the Whitehorse village by a native and a non-Indian woman, who meet with some of the women in the village on the latter's terms. In this informal setting women do beadwork and conversation arises around topics which interest the village women specifically. Any highly preplanned situation is by definition low in opportunities for participation. Leadership cannot arise where rules and aims are imposed from outside. It is out of this less structured situation that there is some possibility for an outgrowth of common interests.

Indian women are not "joiners" in the sense of becoming involved in a structured situation for the sake of belonging. When they see possibilities of achieving worthwhile results from working together, they are likely to do so. One example of this occurred in the operation

of a clothing room in Whitehorse where second hand garments are sold for token prices every Friday night. When this was set up by Maryhouse, the organization of the room was supervised by a staff worker and women from town volunteered to help fold clothing and clean the room on Thursday nights. Because of the limited number of volunteers and amount of work involved in maintaining the operation the room eventually had to be closed. Subsequently a number of Indian women came and requested that they be given the key to the room as well as the responsibility for its upkeep, and the sales were reinstated.

Adult Education:

Closely linked with the subject of voluntary association is that of adult education. There are currently no adult education programmes in the Yukon apart from strictly technical training and upgrading courses which are offered at the Whitehorse vocational school and which have little relevance for mothers. This is consistent with the philosophy that programmes should be geared towards salvaging the youth. However, at the rate at which young people are leaving school, often before reaching high school, the expectations aroused about these programmes seem to be unrealistic.

Adult education is often considered solely in terms of teaching the Indians to make the best of a bad bargain while instructing them in the ways of the non-Indian. Again, the subject is more properly one of communication. Several nurses, social workers and teachers who deal directly with the Indian population have agreed that a general course linking Anthropology and history of the native people would give them a better working basis. Some have stated that it is only after they have been in the area for a few years and are about to leave that they realize what potential does exist. There are definitely native women who would be capable of grounding such a course in practical situations by explaining to non-Indians in a relatively informal setting how their lives and the lives of their families have changed in the past twenty, thirty, or forty years. They could also point out areas where they feel specific problems arise. This idea is being considered for Inuvik where a course may be offered by University extension and credits given. There is a

wealth of knowledge to be obtained from the experiences of the native people and too often it remains dormant. It is only by first reversing the situation that dialogue can be achieved on a realistic basis; in exchange, there are certain skills which non-Indians could teach Indian persons.

There is an oft quoted saying that:

"to teach a man, is to teach an individual, but to teach a woman is to teach a family and a nation."

The attitudes of the mother largely determine the atmosphere on the home, and if she can see some value in education this will be transmitted to her children. A major reason for students leaving school stems from lack of encouragement in the home as well as in the school. If the mother is to maintain her respected role in the family, it is necessary that she be given the opportunity to learn along with her children and to see that education can still be related to the real world. Mothers consistently dichotomized between the concepts of "education for life" which they felt they were given and the kind of education they believe their children are receiving.

No type of education will be acceptable until the individuals involved recognize that there is some value in it; neither can it be bureaucratized by central planning since different needs emerge in different communities. The idea that all learning must occur in a classroom is unrealistic in many cases. Public health programmes have achieved a certain measure of success through nurses who work with individual women in each village. Nurses have recognized that demonstration of practical results at the individual level is more acceptable than is group instruction toward long-term goals. It would

be commendable if teachers could attempt the same approach by visiting homes to provide native parents with some understanding of what is happening to their children. Few teachers in the north visit native parents; P. T. A. 's are white dominated and white run. It is doubtful if many Indian parents are even aware of their existence or what they mean, even if they could feel comfortable attending their P. T. A. meetings. Admittedly, few teachers visit non-Indian parents either, but this ignores the greater gap which exists between the school and the Indian child's home and the value which Indian women place on informal visits in the home rather than appointments in the school office.

A basic tool in any education program is literacy, usually vaguely defined as an elementary ability to read and write. U. N. E. C. O. identifies illiteracy as one of the major problems facing the world today, and estimates that there are at least 700 million illiterates in the world over the age of fifteen, the majority being women. (Bruce, 1968:171) There are no accurate statistics on the level of adult Indian literacy in the Yukon, but it would be safe to estimate that few adults over the age of thirty had the opportunity or saw the necessity to receive more than a few years of formal schooling. Literacy, like education, is not an end in itself, but rather a bridge to the identification of possibilities. The idea that knowledge, be it about self-government or child care can be gained without the support of literacy is highly unrealistic in an area bent on "development". Development has been defined as "use of science and technology to extend man's control over his physical and social environment with the aim of improving human welfare and maximizing the choice of individuals in

social, economic and political spheres. (Lotz, 1967:11) This means ensuring that individuals participate in choices which are affecting them, keeping them informed about what is actually happening and finding out their reactions. Indians are often considered peripheral to this development specifically because they lack the ability to read and write.

Although many of the so-called native "illiterates" speak two or three languages, the fact that they can neither read nor write limits their world and leaves certain of their affairs open to control. As villages become urbanized, signs and posters appear and children bring magazines and newspapers into the house. In a paper dominated society, Indian women, too, receive forms which have to be filled out. Recently the Indian Affairs Branch sent booklets to Indians, requesting information which would lead to changes in the Indian Act. It is doubtful whether many of the recipients in the north could even read them. As women do more shopping in stores they have to contend with a variety of boxes of different shapes and sizes which have to be read. Even menial jobs usually require some measure of literacy. Three letters the researcher received from women in Northern Ontario and the Yukon contained an apology because they had to be written by someone else. Mothers are unable to help children with homework. Numerous examples could be cited from everyday life.

Adult education is a process of voluntary association in that adults do not have to learn what is being taught, and they can leave when they want. A letter from a native woman in Fort Smith noted:

"As far as Adult Education is concerned, I think the women should

be asked exactly what they want to learn. Far too often programs are just set up and we're left with a "take it or leave it" attitude."

Learning new skills means giving up free time and without demonstration of positive results, interest lags quickly. In addition, the adult student often has more experience in life than the teacher and the latter's success depends on his ability to respect this. The tendency for non-Indians to expect involvement to be fast and total is highly unrealistic: simple short term relationships and goals develop before complex long term ones. Cross cultural studies amply document the fact that people will not become involved in a program unless they believe it to be their own.

The Larger Context:

Attitudes held by non-Indians are frequently more important than the actual situation since these are the beliefs which support behavior. These are consistently based on the highly visible Indians, whom everyone sees, and ignore the less visible segment.

Consciously or unconsciously the premise has grown up among many non-Indians in the Yukon that Yukon Indians, lacking a distinctly preserved cultural heritage, are basically inferior to Indian people elsewhere. This is the type of paternalism which conditions behavior, lowers expectations, blinds non-Indians to the potential which does exist and creates a rationale for different treatment. The fact that native people living in the north lacked sufficient surplus necessary to build a complex culture with attendant manifestations of art forms and chiefdoms in no way indicates that they lacked ingenuity; rather it was necessary that they exercise considerable individualism and exploit all available resources in their environment in order to survive. In a continuous process of adjustment to their environment, many of them were more receptive to certain of the Whiteman's ideas than were Indians to the south who saw encroachment as a threat to traditional patterns. Instead of being accepted as individuals, they were lumped as a corporate group and brought under a foreign system of government never completely explained to them and consequently never understood or accepted. Euphemistic reference to "the Indian community" largely reflects a perceptual orientation of non-Indians. (See King, 1967)

As elsewhere in Canada there has been a schizophrenic vacillation between the desire to keep the native in his pristine state and to

absorb him into the larger economy. The non-Indians in charge of administering the Indians can seldom agree among themselves as to which methods should be used. The selection of integration as the major goal of IAB policy coincided with the decision of many Indian people to reject it. Brzezinski (1968) links the growth of ideologies with the need for abstract responses to large remote problems, and more specifically, the ideology of rejection with the widening gap between cultures which precludes any realistic possibility of imitation. "Integration" has come to be the accepted policy of the Indian Affairs Branch and in the north this is seen as a necessary if unfortunate goal which will cause transitional pains for a few generations until ultimately the Indian problem will vanish. This idea that the Indian must first become a tabula rasa whence he will internalize the values of the larger society is short-sighted, and fails to recognize that in Canada this means integration into a plural society in which any realistic decision making must come from both sides. Mannoni, speaking of Africa notes:

"The social and mental state of the native is certainly not to be expressed as a fraction in which the numerator represents the proportion of Western civilization which he has already absorbed and the denominator the total amount we feel he ought to absorb."
(Mannoni, 1964:23)

Another paradox which arises shows the gap between theory and behavior as held and practised by a number of non-Indians. On several occasions, individuals suggested that I spend as little time as possible in Whitehorse with the advice that "there are no interesting Indians here" or "all good Indians are in the bush." The choice of the words "interesting" and "good" reflects the inability of many

non-Indians to see Indian people as people. On one hand the non-Indian demands that the Indian accept certain of his values, but on the other hand he condemns him for trying. An Indian woman who has lived in Whitehorse for some time and has experienced the conflicts of breaking away from the village elaborated this:

"It's fine up to a point but I often feel that they don't really mean it. Even the 'do-gooders' who say they want to help Indian people only want you to get to a certain point so they can say 'look what I did for you'. They never really see you as a person and they never forget that they've 'helped an Indian'."

This desire to assist from a status position is recognised and resented by Indian women everywhere. An Indian woman living in Toronto who is involved in Adult Education programs for Indian women states that she was besieged with requests from people who wanted to "help", but when she asked them to baby-sit the women's children while the latter attended classes, she got little response.

In defining "acculturation" the Social Science Research Council follows the definition advanced by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (Redfield, 1936) as "comprehending those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact with subsequent changes in the original patterns of either or both groups." It is obvious that throughout Canada there has been great variation in the composition of the "groups of individuals" and in the "patterns of first hand contact." This process is neither uni-dimensional nor simple; it occurs at different rates in different areas and involves a complex series of adjustments to a variety of problems. What has often not been understood is that acculturation is a process, not a condition and that it works

two ways: "Culture contact has to be regarded not as a transfer of elements from one culture to another but as a continuous process of interaction between groups of a different culture." (Fortes, Meyer, quoted in Beals, 1962:381) Social scientists who define 'levels of acculturation' of a particular group of individuals and treat these levels as cumulative and one way are limited to looking at only one side of the process without reference to the effects on the other group in the situation.

In a recent issue of North the Clerk of the Privy Council and a former Deputy Minister of the former Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources made the statement:

"We have failed to appreciate the enormous difficulty of adapting people to a new situation for which their concept of life and their ideas of human relationships give them no preparation whatsoever. Perhaps it is because the north is part of Canada geographically that we have failed to recognize the human problem for the fundamental one it is." (Robertson, 1967:49)

The human problem is indeed fundamental but Indian women who have always lived in a highly personalized world where human relations were of primary importance undoubtedly have less to learn about human relationships than the Whiteman. To date, the non-Indian has merely succeeded in shattering the relationships within Indian families. It is less a process of adapting people to a situation than of seeing what they can contribute to it in their own terms. Active participation is a more reasonable solution than is the requirement of passive adjustment which can continue only for so long before it is released in rejection or outright hostility.

The problem of how to establish and maintain co-operation becomes serious. There are no "right" solutions to "problems" because they

can only reflect the interests and perceptions of a specific group. Dr. Edmund Leach has pinpointed one of the most serious hindrances to co-operation in the contemporary world (Aug. 6th, CBC Radio Broadcast "The Best of Ideas"). The education system in the western world places great priority on analysing and breaking down elements of behavior and slotting all experiences into categories which were developed by the Greeks before the Fifth-Century B. C., and which no longer work. When experience proves so complex that it doesn't fit neatly into expected patterns, most people alter neither their expectations nor their categories, but persist in trying to make them coincide. Within any one culture communication channels are relatively clear. Leach points out that what prevented human beings from speciating in the evolutionary process was not interbreeding, but the ability to communicate. There is an academic fallacy that ideas which cannot be articulated in words are neither intelligent nor intelligible. Certain research on the thought processes of women (See Farber, 1963) indicates that while men tend to perceive things analytically, women are more likely to see things as whole, and in many cases this has proved a hindrance to their ability to communicate.

Communications between the Indian and non-Indian cultures is necessary in Canada - this is obvious. But this implies that the non-Indian accept the Indian culture as a valid way of looking at and handling the world. It also implies that the Whiteman should be prepared to learn from the Indian, and that the flow of ideas and information be the way, and not limited to having the Whiteman tell the Indian what to do, and how to do it. Communication between cultures is not an

abstract process - it implies the presence of human communicators. This study has shown that Indian women are already acting as bridges between the two cultures, and the writers suggest that they should be encouraged to expand these activities. The use of Indian women as informants in schools, the opening-up of careers to them in radio and television, their involvement in university courses as resource people - all these would open up new vistas for communication and co-operation between Indians and non-Indians.

Indian women are at the centre of a whole network of communication when they live on a reserve or in an Indian village, and they are also the individuals most likely to migrate permanently from the reserve through marriage. Either way, they tend to come into first-hand contact with a variety of representatives of the non-Indian culture. The distinction of Indian status becomes totally meaningless in many cases in that frequently it is women who have married non-Indians and have been exposed to both cultures who have the greatest ability and willingness to grasp what the problems are. The search for solutions which will magically cause the "Indian problem" to disappear continues, but in some quarters there persists the naive belief that only non-Indians are capable of devising these. Only by letting the people involved in the processes of change define channels whereby ideas can be openly discussed will a starting point for effective action be achieved.

CONCLUSION

While this report was being completed, two newspaper items indicated the present plight of the Indian women in Canada in a way that our words never could.

One, in the News of the North (Yellowknife, August 1st, 1968) read:

"MRS. GIBOT LASHES OUT

The afternoon session (of the meeting between representatives of Indians and Indians of the Mackenzie District) was considerably enlivened by the arrival of Madeline Gibot, wife of the Chief of the Fitz-Smith Band. In a stinging denunciation of Government policy and motives, Mrs. Gibot articulately flattened most things in sight.

Much of what was said was "bull shit", Government experts had better be better than those who built the houses at Hay River, she could have done better herself, she wouldn't put a dog in those built for Indians.

She urged her fellow delegates to fight fire with fire and to choose the ground themselves. They should work out what they wanted and tell the Government what to do. They must think of their children and not leave them a heritage cowardice (sic) like their own grandparents.

With the Treaties the government bought peace, not land, "so we wouldn't go round killing folks like them niggers in the States." While her speech appeared to amuse certain Government delegates, it was warmly applauded by many of the delegates."

Another news item in the Ottawa Citizen (August 30, 1968) was brief, but equally meaningful:

"Indian Woman Found Hanging in Jail Cell

Little Current, Ont (CP) - Senator J. F. Bailey has ordered an inquest into the death of a woman found hanging in a cell Aug. 21 at the provincial police detachment in this Manitoulin Island community.

Police said Theresa Virginia Nahwegezhic, 33, from Sucker Creek Indian reserve, had been arrested for being intoxicated in a public place."

Canada's Indian women seem to be poised between belligerency and deep despair.

The limits of our time and our competence and the size of the problem has meant that we could only briefly touch upon certain aspects of the status and role of the Indian women. The anthropological literature amply demonstrates that there are no inferior cultures - only different ways of being human. Canada, for a variety of reasons, seems to be developing an international, pluralistic society. The nation is experiencing severe problems as it lurches into the modern world. The introduction of modern mechanical technology frees and enormous amount of human energy and potential. But the new tools and methods create a great deal of strain.

In the Canadian north, a high level of science and technology is required to overcome the environmental limitations. The traditional peoples of Canada are experiencing severe stress as they are drawn into the processes of urbanization and mechanization without completely comprehending what is happening to them. Among these people, the women

have been, up to now, an unconsidered remnant, an unimportant residual. Their key role has seldom been recognized. But, there is increasing evidence that they are finding their feet - and their voice - in the new world. There are enough theories and enough empirical evidence to indicate possible roles and ways for Indian women to contribute to easing the stress and strain of accelerated change. But merely because there are possibilities for Indian women to play meaningful roles does not mean they ^{at} they - or IAB - will play these roles. There is nothing deterministic about the future of the Indian women in Canada.

This report contain no recommendations, but a number of possible lines of action have been suggested and it is hoped that both Indians and non-Indians will examine these possibilities and act on them in their own way, in their own time, and in their own terms.

APPENDIX 1.

Family Composition in Ten Yukon Indian Bands

Table 1: Conjugal Families and Single men and women.

BAND	YEAR	CONJUGAL FAMILIES	INDEPENDENT UNMARRIED WOMEN	INDEPENDENT UNMARRIED MEN
CARCROSS	1964	7	12	7
	1965	6	12	8
	1966	6	12	8
CARMACKS	1964	26	23	24
	1965	24	27	27
	1966	24	26	27
CHAMPAGNE	1964	19	15	23
	1965	18	16	24
	1966	17	15	25
DAWSON CITY	1964	10	23	24
	1965	10	24	24
	1966	9	26	24

Key:

COLUMN 1 indicates the number of families in which a recognized union has taken place, (either in a church ceremony or by Indian custom) in which both husband, wife, plus or minus dependent children are present. For further break-down see table 11

COLUMN 2 indicates separated, widowed or divorced women and unmarried women of 21 years of age or older who are considered independently apart from a larger family unit (plus or minus dependent children) For further break-down see chart 3

COLUMN 3 indicates separated, widowed or divorced men as well as unmarried men of 21 years of age or older

This is a gross breakdown which blurs actual household composition and place of residence but it indicates stability of patterns within any one band over a three year period. (derived from the most recent band lists available in Ottawa)

Table 1 (cont.)

BAND	YEAR	CONJUGAL FAMILIES	INDEPENDENT UNMARRIED WOMEN	INDEPENDENT UNMARRIED MEN
MAYO	1964	10	18	20
	1965	12	17	19
	1966	12	17	21
OLD CROW	1964	18	21	19
	1965	18	19	17
	1966	18	22	18
ROSS RIVER	1964	13	15	14
	1965	14	13	13
	1966	14	12	14
SELKIRK	1964	29	17	31
	1965	26	25	33
	1966	27	26	36
TESLIN LAKE	1964	25	17	17
	1965	26	17	20
	1966	24	18	23
WHITEHORSE	1964	27	28	44
	1965	26	37	47
	1966	26	36	49

Table 2:

Marriage Types:1966

Both marriages by Indian custom and church ceremony are formally recognised in band lists. A breakdown for 1966 in 10 villages differentiated these further. Although dates of marriages are not listed, in all cases where marriage occurred by Indian custom, both spouses were born before 1934.

BAND	INDIAN CUSTOM	CHURCH CEREMONY	TOTAL NUMBER OF RECOGNISED UNIONS
CARCROSS	-	6	6
CARMACKS	10	14	24
CHAMPAGNE	5	12	17
DAWSON CITY	2	7	9
MAYO	-	12	12
OLD CROW	-	18	18
ROSS RIVER	5	9	14
SELKIRK	2	25	27
TESLIN LAKE	1	23	24
WHITEHORSE	16	10	26

Table 3:

Independent Women:1966

Column 2 (Table 1), which lists independent women requires further breakdown. This was done for the year 1966.

BAND	UNMARRIED MOTHERS	WIDOWED OR SEPARATED WOMEN ± children	INDEPENDENT WOMEN WITHOUT CHILDREN (age 21-over)	TOTAL
CARCROSS	9	2	1	12
CARMACKS	11	9	6	26
CHAMPAGNE	7	4	4	15
DAWSON CITY	17	4	5	26
MAYO	15	2	-	17
OLD CROW	5	12	5	22
ROSS RIVER	6	2	4	12
SELKIRK	15	17	4	26
TESLIN LAKE	10	4	4	18
WHITEHORSE	20	12	4	36

APPENDIX 11

THE "INDIAN AID" PROJECT

A pilot project for the training of "Indian Aids", designed by a female education specialist in the Indian Affairs Branch is currently under way in Saskatchewan in co-operation with the Extension Department of the University of Saskatchewan. This is to coincide with increasing attention being paid to children under the age of five. A number of Indian mothers (preferably two per community) from Manitoba and Saskatchewan are being trained jointly with teachers with whom they will work in a pre-school classroom. The aims of this project are to:

- a) relieve teachers of non-professional duties.
- b) ease the transition from home to school.
- c) assist communication between teacher and child.
- d) provide reassurance to parents.
- e) encourage Indian women to continue their training as teachers.

If successful it is hoped that it will spread to other provinces, in which case training is expected to be taken over by the provinces.

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